Scanners Set To Discernment: An Evangelical Appraisal Of Extraterrestrial Spirituality

By

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Dedication

Foremost, I would like to thank my family. My parents, Jewell and Bonnie Meekins, always exhibited a spirit of sacrifice so that their children could have a number of things in life that they themselves never did. I would like to thank my brother Carl Meekins, who is skilled in more practical matters, for the assistance he has provided in terms of domestic maintenance and mechanical assistance that have allowed me the time to pursue contemplation of a more theoretical basis. I would also like to make mention of my grandparents Cleveland "Pete" and Louise Schwartz, who often stood for Christian values when doing so brought additional hardships upon themselves during some of the most challenging times of our nation's history. Both have now gone on to their reward in Heaven and rest in Christ. I would also like to make mention of the following. The Rev. Mike Bashoor, who embodied many of the finest attributes of a servant of Christ and who assured me many years ago of the need for Apologetics in the times in which we live. I would also like to acknowledge Evangelist Jack Green, whose comment assured that there is a need for Christians to provide an answer for this kind of phenomena no matter how bizarre or off the wall it might seem in relation to common everyday experience.

Introduction

To many, they are merely figments of the imagination epitomizing either the mark of creative genius or insanity depending upon the context in which they are mentioned. However, UFO's or extraterrestrials may prove to be one of the greatest apologetic challenges of the twenty-first century. These entities (either real or imagined) are increasingly coming to be seen as gods or spiritual guides among those that have embraced worldviews that do not want to acknowledge humanity's dependence on the all-powerful and holy God of the Bible but who are unsettled by the prospects of a universe without guidance from beings more advanced along the chain of existence. It is the purpose of this project to examine a number of the spiritual beliefs surrounding UFO's in popular culture and to contrast these with the orthodox Christian worldview. This will be accomplished by detailing a history of the highlights of the UFO phenomena and by elaborating on a number of the assumptions and movements that have sprung up surrounding this phenomena. By placing these ideas into a larger social and cultural context, it can be seen how worldviews have shifted over time and how Christians need to adapt apologetic approaches in order to reach those mired in these developing systems of thought and belief.

Chapter 1:
Highlight History Of The Contemporary UFO Phenomena

When Christians approach the contemporary UFO and extraterrestrial phenomena, they would be best advised to keep two things in mind that are distinct yet interrelated. Firstly, irrespective of whether UFO's exist or not as an objective or verifiable phenomena, they do in terms of the minds of those that believe in them and draw from them an inspiration as a mechanism for understanding man's place in the broader universe. Secondly, if what those claiming to have contact with does indeed have an existence apart from the internalized structures of perception and belief of those advocating the actuality of such beings, the Christian needs to provide some kind of explanation for them as well in terms of this faith's own comprehensive worldview if Christianity wishes to retain a place of socio-cultural credibility rather than to be regarded as a philosophical relic of the left behind past. The church cannot afford to ignore this issue as today we are already living with the consequences and repercussions of other issues that were allowed to fester by being ignored rather than grappled with head on.

Within their respective contexts, all religions and systems of belief posses at their core a mythology or historical events that the adherents hold to be true and around which subsequent doctrines are derived from or inspired by. For example, Christians view the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus as the seminal event of their faith. Muslims trace the founding of their religion back to the revelation of the Koran to their prophet Muhammad. Likewise, though they may differ ultimately as to other details and implications (as

could be said of any belief system with competing schools of thought and denominations), even casual observers of ufology and UFO movements know of certain key events sparking interest in the question of life from beyond the Earth and its repercussions for man's place in the larger universe.

One of what is now one of the most prominent events looked to by even the most casual of ufological enthusiasts is the incident claimed to have occurred in Roswell, New Mexcio in July 1947. At that time, the military observed on radar over the course of several days an unidentified flying object. Following a thunderstorm, area rancher Mack Brazel went to check his holdings. During the survey, Brazel discovered a unique variety of metallic debris scattered across a sizable area and a trench several hundred feet in length gouged into the earth as if by some manner of impact.

Brazel talked over what he had seen with his neighbors, the Proctors, who suggested that he might have discovered a crashed UFO or a downed government project. As a result of this discussion, Brazel went into town to notify the sheriff. The sheriff in turn reported the incident to military intelligence officer Jesse Marcel.

It is unlikely public interest in this account and speculation about it would have continued to increase to this very day if not for a variety of circumstances surrounding the incident. On July 8, 1947, a press release was issued by the Public Information Office under the orders of the 509th Bomb Group at Roswell that the wreckage of a cashed disk had been retrieved. A second press release was issued the next day that the mysterious debris was actually nothing more than that of a weather balloon.

However, as the years went by, those whose curiosity was roused by the incident could not let it rest as a case of the imagination initially getting ahead of the calmer, more rational explanation of what might have happened. There were simply too many circumstances surrounding the event that later bubbled into public view because those involved did not feel comfortable or even safe in revealing until the passage of time and a number of those involved were themselves nearing the point when they, shall we say, were about ready to leave this planet.

Even if nothing happened any more exotic or of cosmic ramification than the official explanation of a downed weather balloon, the way in which the government is accused of handling the situation must bear some of the responsibility for the legendary status this case has acquired. For example, mortician Glenn Dennis was contacted by base officials inquiring about obtaining small coffins. Upon taking these to the military hospital and visiting with a nurse on staff that he knew, Dennis claims he was threatened by military police and escorted from the premises. Even more disturbing, according to Dennis' affidavit as posted online by the Burlington UFO & Paranormal Research Center, the nurse that is alleged to have drawn pictures of crash victims of a nonstandard human appearance was abruptly transferred to England a few days later.

These two, however, were not the only ones to endure mistreatment less than forthright at the hands of those higher up the chain of command dealing with the aftermath of whatever it was that might have crashed. Brazel was escorted by military police to the offices of the *Roswell Daily Record* where he changed his story to that of having found the debris of a weather observation device earlier in

June rather than during the period of July under question. It has been insinuated that, while in military custody for several days, Brazel was threatened with violence if he did not agree to alter his story.

In another intriguing incident, Major Marcel took along some of the debris to show General Ramey when he made his report to the Commanding Officer of the Eighth Air Force. Marcel placed the debris, which consisted of items such as shards of metal the thickness of tin foil and unbreakable I-beam structures that were three-eighths of an inch by one-fourth of an inch with indecipherable markings, on the General's desk. To get a better idea of where the material had been gathered, Marcel and Ramey went to the map room down the hall. When the two returned, the contents Marcel had brought to show the general had already been taken and replaced by a weather balloon draped over the floor.

Though the Roswell incident may now be one of the public windows into the world of UFO's and speculation into whether or not intelligent life other than and beyond our own might exist, it is by no means the only. In fact, if it was so, it might rather be an example of bureaucratic bungling rather than a conspiracy that has achieved interstellar proportions. However, it is because of the considerable number of occurrences transpiring around that time and ever since that has caused belief in the possibility of extraterrestrial life to grow from being a philosophical possibility embraced only by those of questionable mental stability or those educated beyond reasonable practicality into one of the common cultural assumptions at least assented to (not unlike belief in at least a nominal God) by overwhelming percentages of the population.

Synonymous with the term "UFO" or "unidentified

flying object" is that of "flying saucer". An interesting historical coincidence is that this particular way of categorizing this phenomena was coined nearly around the same time as the events at Roswell were transpiring.

The term was coined in reference to a sighting on June 24, 1947 when pilot Ken Arnold flying at 9200 feet spotted near Mt. Rainier, Washington a series of blue flashes, emanating from what he initially thought must have been a squadron of military fighter jets. However, thanks to his background in aviation, Arnold would conclude that the squadron was anything but conventional. He estimated that the craft were traveling well over 1500 miles per hour (Yenne, 27).

After discussing the incident with friends in Yakima, by the time Arnold completed the next leg of his journey to Pendelton, Oregon, news of his encounter had spread so quickly that a throng of reporters had assembled to record Arnold's account. When pressed for a description of what he had seen, Arnold replied that the objects looked "like a saucer would if you skipped it across the water (Larson, 26)." From there, the press shortened the phrase to "flying saucer", the description that has been with us ever since.

These incidents no doubt rank among those that establish an awareness of UFO's in the mind of the general public. However, these merely represent the bubbling to the surface of a conceptual undercurrent that stretched back prior to those iconic incidents where man had to grapple with an understanding of the universe expanding as a result of advances in technology and where exactly he would look to provide context and meaning to this newly acquired awareness.

Skeptics might counter that, in a sense, people create their own reality. In this case, that would mean people

encountered aliens because they wanted to or were at least suggestible to that possibility. One could not refute that in its entirety. For since at least the early 20th century, Americans have had a fascination with the possibility of extraterrestrial life that went beyond an afternoon's entertainment in the form of a movie, printed story, or broadcast drama. Even if most approached the topic with a rational maturity insisting that aliens were just creatures in comics and pulp magazines geared primarily towards children, there was one incident in particular where it was discovered that the clever in the media could prod the otherwise unsuspecting into becoming quite exercised as to the existence of life from beyond the Earth.

In 1938, Orson Welles staged a radio dramatization of the novel by H.G. Wells titled *The War Of The Worlds*. The story was adapted in the form of a news broadcast covering an alien invasion from Mars. Despite the proviso that the broadcast was a fictionalized dramatic presentation, a number either tuning in after the disclaimer or as a result of getting caught up in the compelling nature of the narrative were convinced that the Earth was actually under attack. A small-scale panic ensued. Some even barricaded themselves in their homes with guns drawn as a last line of defense to prevent any bug eyed monsters from inflicting harm.

Granted, the UFO phenomena has attracted considerable attention over the decades from those of questionable sanity or lacking in compliance to adherence to social norms and conformity. However, these incidents have also been witnessed and experienced by a number whose credentials and sobriety were beyond impeccability. Among these have ranked the frontline personnel of the United States armed forces. Before gaining the name that would make them a

household word (“flying saucers”), UFO’s went by another moniker bestowed upon them by Allied pilots during World War II. Referred to as “foo fighters” by bomber crews, these mysterious lights would come startlingly close to the aircraft but were not necessarily thought to be any kind of ultrasecret German weapon since they never inflicted any harm (North, 294).

Though sightings would ebb and flow over time, they were more than a passing fad and would become a fixture of the public consciousness even if for a while on the periphery of respectability. Government authorities might have had a vested interest in publicly downplaying encounters with UFO’s. However, the institution charged with overseeing the nation’s safety would not have the opportunity to stick its head in the sand in the hopes that these objects would simply float away.

When something unexplained happens in an out of the way place such as Roswell, New Mexico, the highly credentialed and esteemed in government office can cast aspersion and doubt on the credibility of those claiming to have witnessed such things. It is insinuated that, even if such individuals mean well, in terms of mental acuity and especially education such people do not necessarily make the most reliable of witnesses. However, it is much more difficult to level such allegations when these kinds of events literally take place on the doorstep and in the backyard (or at least over top of it) of some of the most powerful people in the country.

In July 1952 on two occasions that month, UFO’s entered Washington, DC airspace not far from and over the White House, Pentagon, and Capitol building. These objects were spotted on radar screens at both Washington National Airport and Andrews Air Force Base. These enigmas were

estimated to be traveling at speeds of 100 to over 7,000 miles per hour, which, according to About.com UFO Guide Billy Booth, was beyond the technological capabilities of the time.

Such an objective threat to Washington DC and thus national security could not go unchallenged. A defensive response was required. Fighters were scrambled to investigate the objects. However, in a manner that almost seemed deliberately taunting if one were inclined to believe some kind of deliberative intelligence was behind the fast moving lights, the objects vanished from radar when approached by the jets only to reappear when the interceptors needed to return to base as a result of low fuel. The five disks departed by 5:30 AM.

Had that been the only incident, an official explanation of either meteorites or an atmospheric phenomena known as a temperature inversion where a denser layer of cold air becomes trapped under warmer air that bends radar waves capable of producing false images might have seemed plausible. However, the objects returned approximately a week later and were once again detected both visually and on radars at National Airport as well as Andrews Air Force Base. Once again, fighters were dispatched to investigate.

During this encounter, however, the objects did not always uniformly flee from the jets giving chase. In one instance, a group of four turned and surrounded their pursuers in a gesture almost playfully flirtatious to convey how it felt to be the hunted rather than the hunter. The pilots' pleas for instructions on how to handle this turn of events were met with silence on the part of the control tower. Fortunately, other than the likely need to change their underpants, no physical harm came to anyone involved as the lights then sped away.

The response of high government officials to this incident was classically textbook. To either calm public apprehension or lull the masses into a sense of complacency, the Air Force announced at a Pentagon press conference held July 29, 1952 that the sightings could be explained in terms of misidentified aerial phenomena such as shooting stars or temperature inversions causing false radar images. However, such a state of objective detachment hardly characterized the government's response during the heat of the crisis. It has been claimed that the Truman White House was so worked up over the matter that pilots were ordered to shoot down any flying saucers that refused orders to land. Of this particular incident, Bill Yenne concludes in *UFO: Evaluating The Evidence*, "...the evidence shows that the Washington incidents are among the largest and strongest series of UFO sightings ever reported (80)."

Despite the credibility of a number of those coming forward with eyewitness reports, since these kinds of encounters run counter to what has been deemed normal particularly from a modernistic technocratic perspective, it can still be difficult to perceive of them as anything other than the flights of fancy or delusions of those deciding to step forward. If they were nothing more, then why has the federal government expended taxpayer resources on what could be called the "Extraterrestrial Question"?

One could argue that the extent of government involvement in extraterrestrial affairs is open to debate. Some that contend that the involvement is extensive probably could not legitimately verify their claims and it is not like the government would offer the kind of confirmation that would settle the issue once and for all. However, the researcher can utilize history as a guide as to

what the government might be doing today.

Project Blue Book commenced in 1952 and ceased in 1970. The purpose of the program was to evaluate data collected regarding UFO's primarily for the purposes of determining whether these objects were a threat to national security. Of the over 12,000 reports collected by Project Blue Book, analysts concluded that the majority were misidentified aircraft or natural phenomena. However, nearly six percent of the total sightings defied explanation.

Because the overwhelming majority of the cases investigated by Project Blue Book were resolved with perfectly terrestrial explanations, officials decreed that the program would officially conclude in January 1970. However, its findings issued in the Condon Report did not provide any explanation regarding the outstanding controversies. In fact, this division within the United States Air Force charged with shedding light on some of the most baffling mysteries of the twentieth century ended up raising a number of additional conundrums.

For example, it is argued that Project Blue Book did not so much simply gather intelligence dispassionately regarding UFO phenomena and issue a report with motivations primarily scientific in nature. Rather it has been accused that Blue Book was itself concealing evidence pertinent to any conclusion that would ultimately be reached. Granted, there has not yet been a decisive moment such as in the television series "V" where a number of alien craft appear overhead or land on the Mall in Washington DC with a little green man emerging and making the iconic request of "Take me to your leader." However, another kind of intervention might be of greater existential significance for the time being in the lives of those believing they have encountered non-human intelligences than the more

traditional flying saucer described in classic UFO encounters. This is none other than the so-called "alien abductions".

More will be said about this phenomena in a later chapter since these traumatic encounters often play a significant role in shaping the worldviews of those whom perceived extraterrestrials hold a central place in their respective belief systems. However, in highlighting a number of iconic moments in this introductory chapter, attention for now will be focused on the case of Barney and Betty Hill. In 1961, married New Hampshire couple Betty and Barney Hill were on their way home from vacation in Canada. Both remember seeing a traveling light like a bright star that became progressively brighter as it hovered over the trees (Kettlekamp, 50).

Out of curiosity, the Hills parked to get a better look at the luminous anomaly, with Barney getting out of the vehicle for a closer examination with a pair of binoculars. Through the spyglasses, Mr. Hill ascertained what he perceived to be approximately five individuals walking around inside the object. As would be the reaction of most to such an encounter, Mr. Hill promptly returned to his vehicle in order to continue his journey home.

However, that would not be the end of the Hills' encounter with the unexplained. As the couple proceeded down the highway, they heard noises similar to a tuning fork which caused them both to feel tingly and sleepy (Kettlekamp, 51). When the Hills emerged from their state of somnolent discombobulation, they were startled to discover that they were 35 miles farther south than when they had last noticed and could not account for the preceding two hours.

One might chalk up the entire episode to extreme fatigue

and as a reason why to be extremely cautious about driving late at night when one is at less than one's mental and physical optimum. However, it seemed the Hills were unable to shake off the effects of the experience or shrug it off as one of those life lessons learned. Both Barney and Betty were profoundly impacted. Barney developed a rash on his stomach and was plagued by chronic health problems following the incident. Betty was haunted thereafter by recurrent nightmares so intense that she eventually sought psychiatric counseling.

Evidence pointing towards an encounter went beyond symptoms that could possibly be explained as psychosomatic no matter how sincerely credible the Hills might have happened to be. Barney's shoes were visibly scuffed. Even more bizarre, when a compass needle was placed over mysterious metallic spots in the trunk of their vehicle, the needle within the device would spin (Kettlekamp, 51). Unidentified objects were detected by the radar at Pease Air Force Base around the time of the encounter as reported by the Hills.

However, the Hills are remembered even more so for something that would add yet another level to the UFO phenomena, and in the minds of some shed light as to perhaps why these entities have allegedly traveled all the way to the planet earth as well as deepen that mystery all at the same time. Some insist that Barney and Betty Hill were abducted by non-human entities. Skeptics are often quick to conjecture that those claiming to have encounters --- especially to the point of claiming to be either victims of or in confederation with these beings from beyond the normal --- are desperately seeking attention. And that is certainly a concern to keep in mind. However, initially Barney and Betty Hill were not aware to the full extent of what may

have taken place.

As part of their therapeutic counseling, the Hills were separately placed under hypnosis. Their respective accounts, not given in the presence of or to the knowledge of the other, displayed a degree of similarity worthy of note. Not revealed previously, the Hills now insisted that, upon hearing the beeping tones, they were taken aboard the craft and each taken into a separate chamber. According to the account provided by the Hills, their abductors possessed a countenance eerily not quite human as the creatures lacked distinctive lips and seemed to communicate telepathically. The beings were particularly interested in the differences between Barney and Betty since they were an interracial couple and that Barney wore dentures while Betty's teeth were natural.

Psychoanalysts and counselors might point out that the fact that these hypnotic trances brought out such details instead point to the stresses the Hills may have been under. For at that time such marriages were not that common and would be replete with a number of challenges that would be below the surface even if the love between the couple was strong enough to endure them. However, there was one aspect of what Betty recalled that would be difficult to fabricate or dissemble about.

According to Betty, a needle was inserted into her naval as part of what her captors informed her was a pregnancy test. Today, such procedures are so commonplace that mention of them would not raise the eyebrows of a therapist transcribing this kind of testimony. However, Larry Kettlekamp points out in *UFO's & ET's: Are They Real?* that needle examinations like that described by Betty Hill were not conducted in 1961.

The chronicle detailed in this chapter should in no way

be considered comprehensive. Rather, it has endeavored to list a number of highlights to suggest that accounts of contact with beings from beyond this earth or at least belief that one has had contact with beings from beyond this earth should not be dismissed outright as signs of questionable sanity. Those mentioned in these pages span the breadth of the ways of life found in contemporary America from the humblest of trailer park paupers all the way into the deepest corridors of power. In the chapters that follow, we will explore a number of belief systems that incorporate non-terrestrial intelligences as fundamental concepts into their perceptions of reality, how the concept of life from beyond the Earth is used to mold culture or society itself, and (most importantly) provide an Evangelical perspective to the perennial question if we human beings are alone in the cosmos.

Chapter 2:
Examples Of UFO Religions

To most Americans, the idea of beings from beyond this world does not at the moment impact their lives to any appreciable degree. Usually to most people the consideration of the topic is more akin to a transient pondering that may creep intermittently into their minds from time to time. Sadly, in that way then, such entities are a bit like God to many who are, for the most part, self-sufficient in their own hearts and existentially content. However, it is because of this philosophical complacency that the idea of powers from beyond the terrestrial sphere becomes such a danger in terms of worldview since the hearts of so many are open to persuasion and influence.

Though they are at present considered to be outside the mainstream of contemporary thought and convention, there are a number of sociological cults, theological sects, and religious organizations that embrace what our culture categorizes as UFO's or extraterrestrials as the pivotal elements of their respective belief systems. It might be asked that, if these groups and their adherents are for the most part found along the fringes of acceptability, then why ought Christians take the time to acquaint themselves with these outlooks when the church finds itself confronted by a staggering number of other spiritual challenges?

The simplest response as to why the Christian should acquaint themselves with the rudiments of UFO religions is that Christ died for these people as well. II Peter 3:9 assures that the Lord is not willing that any should perish. In I Corinthians 9:22, Paul writes that "I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." These verses indicate that believers need an apologetic for

these people as well as they do for more conventional styles of unbelief such as evolution or the New Age. After further study, one will likely discover a degree of philosophical overlap with these more widely known systems of thought that often serve as intellectual tributaries introducing many to worldviews embracing extraterrestrials.

There are also reasons of a more practical nature as to why the Evangelical Christian needs to have a basic grasp regarding a number of these seemingly bizarre groups. Admittedly, the most enthusiastic adherents of these kinds of ideas regarding extraterrestrials may not rank among the most conventionally gregarious of people that come to mind. Often comedians such as Jay Leno make jokes deriding the social skills of science fiction fans a regular feature of standup routines. However, members of these groups often posses a zeal for what they believe comparable to career missionaries or professional clergy in more establishmentarian religions.

World history teaches that the obscure sects of one era can become the major religions later on down the flow of time. For example, Christianity was in its early days in the time of the Roman Empire considered a minor cult within Judaism and Buddhism began as one troubled Hindu's quest to find true enlightenment. Thus, if for no other reason, the Christian needs to be aware of the basics of UFO-based systems of belief in order to protect the church against infiltration by these doctrines and to prevent loved ones from being lured into what could very well be part of the strong delusion spoken of in II Thessalonians 2:11.

Perhaps the most prominent example of a group drawing its spirituality from UFO's and extraterrestrials was the Heaven's Gate cult. This particular group earned a place in infamy when, on March 26, 1997, thirty-nine members

committed mass ritualistic suicide. Though this act is not necessarily the outcome that will befall all of those embracing ideas about UFO's, it does serve as a warning as to how seriously some of the most enthusiastic are willing to take their beliefs. For it was a belief in UFO's that prompted the group to end their lives together.

Heaven's Gate was founded by Marshall Applewhite and Bonnie Lu Nettles. The two met when Nettles served as Applewhite's nurse during a hospitalization for a heart blockage in 1975. A relationship blossomed around a shared interest in the occult. Nettles ultimately abandoned her family to devote herself full time to these pursuits that would take on a fanatic missionary fervor.

Nettles and Applewhite were not simply interested in UFO's from the standpoint of an aerial phenomena or even as a scientific curiosity pointing to the possibility of life elsewhere in the universe. Richard Abanes writes in *End Time Visions: The Doomsday Obsession*, "They came to believe that they were each possessed by a space being from The Evolutionary Level Above Human [T.E.L.A.H] (33)." Applewhite claimed he had been possessed by the entity inhabiting Jesus. Nettles claimed that the being humanity referred to as God the Father resided within her. The two were not satisfied simply with the knowledge that they had been selected to host such august cosmic personages. The duo wanted to spread their "revised gospel" to the world.

The message advocated by Applehwite and Nettles, who would pop up from time to time under a number of aliases such as "Bo" and "Peep" or "Nincom" and "Poop", could be described as a kind of futuristic Gnosticism. It was expected that their most devoted followers were to give up nearly every aspect of their individual human natures including names, family relations, gender identity, and

sexual impulses even within the context of marriage for the chance of being deemed worthy of a place aboard the spaceship that would elevate them above mundane existence to the Kingdom of God (Abanes, *End Time*, 33). But whereas to many such notions end up being idol and fashionable philosophizing often in the attempt to look cool in the pursuit of picking up the opposite sex or climbing the corporate ladder, Applewhite's disciples would take their beliefs to a shocking level.

The technognostics of the Heaven's Gate sect believed all trappings of the physical needed to be eliminated before the essential inner self could be deemed worthy of the Next Level. In pursuit of this objective, six male members of the group (including Applewhite) castrated themselves in order to free their flesh from sexual desires. Female acolytes were required to downplay their feminine characteristics by cutting their hair. And of course, members were drilled in the importance of submitting nearly every single thought to cross their minds to the leadership of the group, referred to reverently as the "Older Members" (Abanes, E*nd Time*, 35).

If not for an otherwise wondrous event, the Heaven's Gate group would have likely remained just one of those idiosyncrasies jotting the California intellectual landscape. They would have otherwise likely never gained all that much attention beyond the notice of specialized religious scholars and UFO enthusiasts. But towards the end of 1996, the Hale-Bopp Comet began drawing in the direction of Earth.

When astronomers had to adjust their trajectory for this celestial body, a number of zealous ufologists began circulating the idea that this course alteration had been carried out by extraterrestrial intelligences in order to conceal their spacecraft flying close behind the comet as it

made its way around the solar system. Such enthusiasm erupted that the amateur astronomer taking a photograph of an object behind the comet (ultimately believed to be the star SAO141894 by more dispassionate researchers) debated his findings on *Coast To Coast* (a national radio program focusing on paranormal esoterica) that a UFO had been discovered with the comet's co-discoverer Alan Hale. For his troubles, Hale was denounced in an Internet smear campaign claiming he was part of a government conspiracy for failing to embrace the extraterrestrial hypothesis (Abanes, *End Times*, 40).

The leadership of Heaven's Gate picked up on this unfolding controversy. At last, Applewhite concluded, a craft was arriving to whisk the initiated away from the calamity about to commence and upward into expanding levels of enlightenment. The thing was, though, the group believed that the physical body was an inherently corrupt distraction that had to be discarded before this great journey or transmigration could be undertaken. Since the comet (or rather the craft using this interplanetary wanderer as a disguise) was not going to wait around and allow each of the members to saunter aboard at the end of a natural course of life, the adherents of this belief acted preemptively by taking their own lives. On the scene, police found thirty-nine people wearing the same black uniform, draped in a purple shroud, laying in bed with their hands at their sides (Abanes, *End Time*, 32).

Granted, the Heaven's Gate sect represents the most extreme example of a UFO cult. Most such groups, though just as dangerous to the eternal well being of an individual's soul, would much rather keep their followers alive if for no other reason than the continued propagation of the group and to get as much as possible out of the adherents in terms

of either finances or contributed labor. In an age of tolerance and diversity where one can face the loss of a job or even jail time in certain countries for expressing anything less than glowing approval regarding the motivations of the proponents of certain minority viewpoints, it can take courage to point out that some have not so much gotten aboard the UFO phenomena out of a sense of philosophical sincerity but rather as a way to turn a quick buck or two. Foremost among the examples of such that quickly come to mind is none other than Scientology.

Most Americans passingly familiar with Hollywood celebrity culture have at least heard of Scientology because of that movement's association with household names such as Tom Cruise and John Travolta. The movement has achieved a degree of popularity in entertainment circles as a technique whereby these often troubled souls hope to gain a degree of control over their mental and emotional lives. However, once an individual gets involved with the group, they might find out too late that they have gotten involved with something that will not so much assist them in keeping them grounded in reality but may actually result in them losing their grip on it by ushering them into a fantasy realm surpassing an effects-laden summer blockbuster.

Scientology was founded by L. Ron Hubbard, a pulp magazine and science fiction author, so skilled at his craft that, even to those critical of him, it can be a challenge to decipher where the facts about him end and the imaginative yarns begin. If nothing else, one could not question this particular writer's sense of self. According to Richard Abanes in *Religions Of The Stars: What Hollywood Believes & How It Affects You*, to his supporters, Hubbard is nothing short of "the single most influential author and humanitarian of the modern age" whose works are "the

definitive statement on the human mind and spirit (100)." Yet others dismiss him as little more than a creative charlatan.

Trying to decipher who exactly L. Ron Hubbard was beyond a prolific weaver of tales could be an undertaking with all of the mystery and intrigue equal to a big-budget Hollywood thriller. According to J. William Smit in *The Seductive Power Of The New Age: Where Do We Draw The Line*, L. Ron Hubbard, who spent his early years on his grandfather's Montana cattle ranch, was noted for his love of adventure from an early age as epitomized by his involvement in scouting and blood brother membership in the Blackfoot Nation (43). However, whether that thirst translated into heroic physical exploits or simply imaginative feats of the mind would be another matter entirely. For example, despite claims of acts of valor in World War II such as fleeing imprisonment from the island of Java on little more than a raft, sinking two submarines off the coast of Oregon, and sustaining a partial loss of eyesight, no definitive record of these adventures exist anywhere in the archives of the U.S. Navy (Abanes, *Religion,* 102). If anything, what records do exist seem to paint him, to use highly technical language, as something of a screw up that would put Gomer Pyle in the league of first rate military greats such as Hannibal and General Patton.

According to Richard Abanes in *Religion Of The Stars*, Hubbard claimed that when he commanded the patrol boat the *U.S.S. PC-815* on a supply run to San Diego, he spotted two submarines that led a pursuit resulting in the release of depth charges. Navy investigators would later conclude that no such enemy craft were in the vicinity despite the considerable excitement (103). However, that would not be the conclusion of Hubbard's bumbling aquatic escapades.

Soon after the encounter with the phantom u-boats, Hubbard unwittingly dropped anchor in Mexican waters where he proceeded to conduct live fire exercises in close proximity to Mexican nationals. As a result of these actions and in conjunction with a recurrent ulcer, L.Ron Hubbard would not go down in the annals of naval history as the dashing hero he hoped to become (Abanes, *Religion Of Stars*, 107).

What L. Ron Hubbard lacked in the applied military sciences he more than made up for when it came to applying imaginative and esoteric concepts to the printed page. During the 1930's, Hubbard's science fiction, fantasy, and adventure stories earned him a reputation likening him to such authors as H.G. Wells and Edgar Allen Poe (Smitt, 44). However, the modest success such literary undertakings might have brought him would not be enough to satisfy his expansive ego.

In one of his most remembered comments among friends and associates, Hubbard remarked that the real money was not so much in churning out stories for a pittance per word but rather in starting a religion. Left a bit shiftless and morose following the conclusion of the Second World War, Hubbard would begin steps down the path that would free his imagination from being seen as something only fanciful no matter how much it might be appreciated by readers to become something disciples would stake the very well being of their souls upon.

In the mid 1940's, Hubbard's interest in occult philosophy that he had had since his teens upon reading the works of infamous Satanist Aliester Crowley was sparked with renewed vigor upon making the acquaintance of Jack Parsons. Through his verbal acumen, Hubbard ingratiated himself to, as described by Richard Abanes in *Religions Of*

The Stars, the "odd mix of Bohemian artists, writers, scientists, and occultists" that had taken up residence in Parson's California domicile (107). This residence turned out to be something of a forerunner to a commune complete with the sex and drugs even if it was a few years early for the rock and roll. The mansion also doubled as the headquarters of a local chapter of the Ordo Templi Orientis (an occult society founded by Aliester Crowley). Hubbard's motivations for associating with such a group are open to dispute. Scientologist doctrine would claim that Hubbard infiltrated the sect on behalf of naval intelligence (Smitt, 45). Others, including Hubbard's own son, point out how Hubbard would come to view Crowley as a very good friend and how many of Hubbard's writings borrowed considerably from the infamous occultist.

Even if Hubbard had infiltrated the group to gather information on its activities, the extent to which he was willing to participate to maintain his cover was downright disturbing. In 1946, Parsons and Hubbard undertook a ritual, which was essentially a glorified orgy, where it was hoped that nearly two weeks of ongoing fornication with Marjorie Cameron would impregnate the aspiring actress with the Antichrist as Hubbard and Parsons channeled an entity referred to as "Babalon" (Abanes, *Religious*, 108). Hubbard absconded a few weeks later with Parsons' girlfriend and ten-thousand swindled dollars.

The sensitive might remark that the aforementioned anecdote was included for no other reason that to titillate in a carnal or sensationalistic manner. It does little to shed light on the subject of extraterrestrial spirituality. However, as this analysis progresses, and in harkening all the way back to the traumatic encounter where the Hills believed they had been violated against their wills, it will be seen

that human sexuality and reproduction are central issues of focus in these varied encounters with intelligences from beyond our physical world.

After parting ways with Parsons, Hubbard returned to his literary undertakings. However, following his excursion into the world of intensive occultism, Hubbard's musings began to turn from adventuresome space opera towards a more openly metaphysical bent. Buzz was afoot that Hubbard was developing a new science of the mind. Enthusiasm for it was not confined to obscure circles of science fiction fandom. In a time when news was less than instantaneous, no less a public figure than Walter Winchell, whom many would consider one of the primary journalistic figures of the mid-20th century on whom Matt Drudge would model his own persona, reported in 1950, "There is something new coming up in April called Dianetics, a new science which works...the physical in the field of the mind. From all estimations, it will prove to be as revolutionary for humanity as the first cavemen's discovery and utilization of fire (Smitt, 45)."

First introduced in the May 1950 issue of the science fiction magazine *Astounding*, Dianetics would eventually serve as the path through which many would be introduced to the ideas that would serve as the foundation of Scientology. Dianetics postulated that the mind consisted of the analytical or conscious component and the reactive component consisting of the mental records of everything experienced by the individual that Hubbard referred to as engrams. These held over mental impressions, that we are usually not necessarily aware of, are what lead to human misery and prevent the individual from actualizing their full potential. It was these for a fee, of course, that the organized practitioners of this brand of mind science would

assist the maladjusted in releasing so that the person might be made whole or rather "clear", to use the technical parlance.

So far so good. No one is locked into any particular worldview or religion for agreeing with the assertion that the individual can become bogged down from the traumas and disappointments of the past. However, this near universal truth that draws the initially unsuspecting in through Dianetics' promise of emotional health and mental vitality is eventually swapped for an entirely different variety of metaphysics as aspiring members move higher up the levels into the Church of Scientology. This was the movement's more outrightly religious arm established by Hubbard when he ran afoul of business partners and the critical eye of the psycho-medical establishment. Hubbard wanted the wider leeway granted to expressions of religious belief under the First Amendment.

All very interesting, the student of Apologetics might remark. But apart from the fact that Hubbard spent part of his public career as a science fiction author, what does this really have to do with this chapter's topic of examples of UFO religions they might ask? As one moves up the ranks of Scientology (all for a fee of course), one learns that a number of the engrams wearing down the human psyche, which Scientology's auditing process claims to expunge, are not necessarily the mental residue left over from the disappointments of childhood or the other let downs we all experience as we travel through life in a fallen world.

According to Scientologist doctrine, the individual at his core is composed of an immaterial spirit body known as a "thetan" which is a manifestation of theta or the ground and source of all life (Smit, 51). Thetans, in turn, created the physical universe as a form of amusement but became so

enchanted by their own handiwork that they lost touch with their origins transcending the matter/space/time continuum in which we now find ourselves mired. Since the thetans go through a continual cycle of embodiment and disembodiment, unresolved engrams compile over multiple lifetimes spanning back eons.

The goal of the Scientology auditing process is to reach the level of Operating Thetan. However, once one reaches this threshold where one is on the verge of achieving what can be described as nothing short of super powers such as astral projection (the ability to travel outside of the physical body) and to perceive reality without reliance upon the senses, one learns that there are yet additional levels one must progress through before the individual can truly reach total liberation of consciousness. Foremost among these is where what would be considered extraterrestrials come into play. Not only must we expunge our own emotional shortcomings and disappointments, Scientologist doctrine insists, but each of us has latched onto us any number of disincarnated "Body Thetans" that must also be removed.

This is the result of an intergalactic warlord named Xenu. Seventy-five million years ago, to solve interstellar overpopulation Xenu conspired to have billions of his subjects massacred by imprisoning them on jetliners capable of space travel which where to be flown into volcanoes over which H-bombs would be detonated (Abanes, *Religions*, 114). These disembodied thetans then roamed the Earth in search of hosts. For his crimes, Xenu was imprisoned somewhere beneath the Pyrenees and Earth was declared to be off limits to most alien civilizations with the planet to be used primarily as a penal colony (one might suppose as something reminiscent of the original intentions for Australia).

Because such a belief flies in the face of what most for now are willing to accept as rational, the Church of Scientology has gone to considerable lengths to keep what it classifies as Operating Thetan Level Three out of the public limelight. In pursuit of such a goal, lawsuits were filed in the attempt to block the release of this teaching beyond paying members. Even in his recounting of it, researcher Richard Abanes went out of his way to point out that the version he consulted came from publicly available Internet files rather than from documents obtained from disgruntled Scientologists, no doubt attempting to protect himself from the vindictive tactics Hubbardites have often been accused of inflicting upon critics of the group (Abanes, 128). However, not all such groups that hold beliefs regarding non-terrestrial entities at the center of their respective worldviews resort to the intimidating nature of America's system of adversarial jurisprudence to keep knowledge of these kinds of doctrines confined to the respective sect's higher-level initiates. Some actually publicly acknowledge their embrace of extraterrestrials as the intelligences from beyond the Earth that imbue their lives with meaning and go to considerable lengths to secure the attention of the media through a variety of outlandish stunts and claims to promote this viewpoint.

One such group is known as the Raelians. The members of this group, also known as “the Structure”, follow a French-Canadian former race car driver named Claude Vorilhon. Vorilhon changed his name to “Rael” after extraterrestrials contacted him to be their messenger to prepare mankind for the pending arrival of these beings from beyond the stars (Larson, 171).

Though the balanced Christian realizes that the Bible contains figurative language allowing an infinite God to

convey His message to His finite human creatures in a form we are capable of comprehending, for the most part believers take the holy text to be a record and revelation of actual events that have or will take place. For example, when it says in the Book of Genesis that in the beginning God created the Heaven and the Earth, the good Evangelical believes that the omnipotent spirit being referred to as "God" made the world and everything in it out of nothing as a result of His own power, goodness and love.

Raelians, on the other hand, believe that what is referred to as God in the pages of the Bible is actually a reference to extraterrestrials from beyond the Earth. According to this perspective, that is why in the Old Testament that God is called "Elohim". The Hebrew plural does not signify the triune nature of the unified godhead, as insisted upon by orthodox systematic theology, but rather because there was more than one alien appearing to primitive man that did the best he could to record these encounters in the pages of the documents now considered to be the Scripture.

Thus, the Bible is reinterpreted in a manner less than supernatural but with more intervention on behalf of humanity than if the species was left to fend on its own in a universe without the oversight of any higher order intelligence. In Raelian theology, man did not come into being by God sculpting him from the dust of the ground and breathing life into the nostrils of Adam. Instead, the Elohim through genetic intervention advanced the native hominids of primordial Earth to man's current physiological configuration, which bore considerable resemblance to that of the Elohim. This is what was meant when the text reads in Genesis 1:26, "Let us make man in our image."

This kind of hermeneutic is applied to other Biblical narratives as well. For example, the pillar of smoke that

guided the Israelites through the wilderness in the Book of Exodus was the exhaust of a spacecraft. The Ark of the Covenant was a nuclear-powered communication device through which the Elohim relayed messages to the nation of Israel (Larson, 172).

Likewise, Raelian interpretations of the New Testament are no less fanciful and thus as dangerous to the soul. For example, when Christ walked on the water, the act was not the result of His divine power that even the winds and waves had to obey, but rather the deed was the result of highly sophisticated anti-gravity technology (Larson, 173). Even more spiritually threatening is the Raelian notion that Christ's Resurrection from the dead was not the definitive proof of His own godhead as described in Matthew 12:39-40. Instead, the resurrection of Jesus was the result of the advanced medical knowledge of his extraterrestrial benefactors.

Upon hearing what those in the Raelian movement profess, at first it can elicit a bit of amusement in realizing that people can believe something as fanciful. Upon additional reflection, one cannot help but feel a bit of sadness for those so desperate to avoid the realization that they are a sinner in need of redemption through the work of the Savior that they feel the need to construct or assent to such elaborate scenarios to explain away the intertwined simplicity and profundity of the Gospel message. However, the Christian must realize that the Raelian movement presents a greater threat than a momentary sense of glum pity the believer might feel as they see those professing such concepts strolling past the church window. As with many worldviews and religions, the Raelians hope to influence the universe around them.

As has been pointed out earlier in this exposition, most

groups and individuals involved with paranormal intelligences to the point that these beings influence the way those holding these assumptions perceive and approach reality have a preoccupation with the human reproductive process or have been victimized by those that do. In the case of the Heaven's Gate sect, profound disgust with human physicality led to the members of the sect first mutilating themselves through the act of castration and later suicide so that the adherents might be able to shed their material bodies in order to ascend to the next level of enlightened existence. It would be an understatement to say that the Raelians held to an opposing perspective.

If belief in extraterrestrials is the bedrock upon which the Raelian movement is built, then sex is the oil that keeps that movement lubricated. In what might be considered a carnal distortion of the Vulcan philosophy from *Star Trek* of infinity diversity in infinite combinations (known as the "IDIC") Vorilhon teaches that any form of consensual sex is acceptable as a form of sensual meditation that transports the individual closer to infinity (Larson, 174). For the really spiritual, there is the longing for sexual union with the Elohim to bring about an ecstasy that those in the group might describe as simply out of this world. About the only kind of relationship Rael seems to frown upon is traditional monogamous marriage where the partners stick together even through the times of unhappiness and ebbed feelings for the sake of the children. Partners are encouraged to abandon spouses that no longer interest them and to pawn off on social service agencies unwanted children.

As can be seen, Raelians can theoretically pack a wallop in terms of ravaged relationships and broken families. Sadly, in this day of moral and cultural relativism where it is constantly insisted that what is right for you is not

necessarily right for me, not much can be done about those whose lives that have been knocked out of orbit by this extraterrestrial sect other than perhaps enforcing child support laws against the parents attempting to run out on their families when the idea of an earthbound domesticity no longer seems like an idea out of this world. There is little the Christian can do on behalf of the average Raelian other than to be a personal witness and perhaps a shoulder to lean on when lives are shattered as is the inevitable result when lives are lived in a manner so alien to what God intended. However, it must be noted that members of the Raelian movement are not simply content to live their lives in seclusion in a continual spate of nihilistic debauchery. Like so many aberrant sects, this one hopes its beliefs will have an influence upon the world beyond the organization's formalized membership.

Most Americans, including this author, first heard of the Raelians in the opening years of the twenty-first century in regards to a story serving as an example of how the lines between news and science fiction are growing increasingly blurred. In 2000, a biotech company called Clonaid announced plans to produce a clone. This research would be undertaken primarily for the benefit of homosexual couples wanting a child of their own or parents that had lost an offspring in death as was the case of the wealthy couple serving as the effort's primary financial backers. Children theoretically engineered through a cloning process would differ from test tube babies brought into existence as a result of more conventional invitro fertilization techniques. For whereas the children coming about through established laboratory insemination procedures still exhibit the same kind of genetic fortuity or divine artistry (dependent upon one's perspective) resulting in an individual whose

composition and traits are not known beforehand like in a conception brought about through natural copulation, a clone would be the genetic duplicate of the individual being cloned.

The haughty advocates of a pure science divorced from any apriori philosophical presuppositions might insist that Christians ought not bring religious principles or ethical concerns into what ought to be considered merely an exercise in technological advancement. If that is the case, the same counsel should be extended to the Raelians as well. As with their counterparts in the more blatantly political arena, often the spokesmen and leaders of sects of questionable forthrightness are masters of media manipulation and carefully weigh everything that they say. For example, in a 2002 CNN interview, Rael or Claude Vorilhon explicitly informed anchor Carol Lin that Clonaid --- the biotech company conducting research into this variety of human replication --- is organizationally distinct from the Raelian movement. However, it cannot be denied, and Vorilhon admits as such, that his unique spiritual perspective serves as the inspiration behind the corporation's undertakings. In fact, the head of Clonaid Bridgette Boisselier --- who holds two doctorates and has taught college level chemistry --- has also served as a bishop in the Raelian church (Meekins, 28).

A number of renowned scientists such as Issac Newton credit as inspiration for their experimental undertakings the desire to think God's thoughts after Him. In regards to cloning, the Raelians do not simply want to understand how the extraterrestrials they view as mankind's creators brought our species into existence through tinkering with lower order primates. Rather, the sect's goal is for humanity to master the technology so that we might, to quote words

uttered during another moment of cosmic hubris whose repercussions echoed down through the ages, "be as gods". However, in this instance, those would be little green men that zoom about in flying saucers.

Raelians do not believe in a traditional conception of God per say, at least in terms of an incorporeal omnipotent intelligence. This does interestingly raise the question of how far back into infinity does this leapfrogging of advanced space travelers to raise what pass for apes on other worlds to the level of reflective self awareness extends. To the Raelians, God is simply the leader of the extraterrestrial council that came to Earth to engineer our world's version of humanity. Interestingly, Lucifer was the scientist among the Elohim that actually bestowed humanity upon our species and Satan the leader of the faction opposed to our creation because of the violent tendencies he realized that would be within mankind (Palmer, 80).

This creates a bit of a problem when, in terms of fundamental being or existence, your God is not all that different than you with the exception that he has more advanced toys. Part of the appeal of any religion is what it offers as an escape from the inevitable decline we all realize that lays before us that will ultimately result in death. The carnal allure of Raelianism with its emphasis on sexual pleasure is not without its appeal. However, even that does not keep away the terrors in the middle of the night no matter how buxom or virile your slumber companion for that evening might happen to be.

Thus, since Raelianism is circumscribed by the boundaries of a closed materialistic system, the hope of the eternal it offers must reside within that narrow sphere of finitude. Thus, the observer of religious affairs has uncovered the motivation for the fascination Raelians

possess for a branch of science that at best has only taken a few baby steps beyond a fringe status and is still many light years away from the respectability of the conventional medical establishment in terms of application to the generation of full scale human beings.

Raelian doctrine holds that the key to continued existence beyond the traditional biological lifespan (eternal life if you will) is to be found in cloning. This sacrament within the Raelian faith has been proposed in a variety of conceptual variations. Initially referred to as a regeneration of the cellular plan, it was originally taught by Rael that such bio-reconstitution would be carried out by the Elohim themselves for the benefit of mankind (Palmer, 84). In anticipation of such a day in a manner reminiscent of the way many Christians prefer burial in anticipation of the resurrection, part of Raelian funerary ritual consisted of removing a small portion of bone from the forehead for storage in a Swiss bank vault. It was taught that the Elohim would reconstitute the person from the preserved portion of DNA if the individual was deemed worthy of such from the records in the databanks of the Elohim's computers that monitor the actions of all individuals (Palmer, 60). Some will note that the forehead is also the location of the third eye, prominent in a number of occultic and esoteric traditions, that is considered the seat of mystic or psychic power.

However, over time Rael has altered the doctrine slightly. While the hope of intervention on the part of the Elohim is still held out for those that have already passed on, other promises are extended (like a hand regrown as a result of cloning) to those still alive at the moment. If one waits until after death to grow a new body, one wades into a philosophically murky dilemma of how identical the

resurrected clone would be to its progenitor. For the life experiences of the clone would be different from those of the genetic source (perhaps the Raelians ought to get together with the Scientologists to work out a way engrams could be transferred from the neural network of one brain into another).

In this revised message, Rael insists that the Elohim may not be as directly necessary as once thought. As cloning technology advances, members could simply replace failed tissues and organs with bioengineered upgrades, thus theoretically postponing physical death indefinitely. This could also take a bit of pressure off of Rael and prevent his entire movement from collapsing if the Elohim do not manifest themselves visibly on Earth by 2035 as predicted.

In terms of success, the aspirations of the Raelian movement may outpace what the group is capable of accomplishing. This is evident in regards to the issue over which the group has garnished its largest portion of public attention, namely this one of human cloning. Despite such enthusiasm and bold statements attempting to place the Raelian movement or those inspired by the sect at the forefront of this biotechnical revolution, their involvement in such endeavors has come to a screeching halt. It seems the crescendo was reached around Christmas time of 2002.

On December 26, 2002, Bridgette Boisselier announced to the press that birth had been given to a cloned child referred to, of all things, as “Eve”. The Raelian geneticist assured the world that both the interests of the child and the integrity of the scientific method were utmost priorities. Matters such as DNA testing were to be overseen by an international panel of independent scientists.

As the days progressed, Boisselier backed down from one claim after another. First, she claimed that, though she

wanted the child to be genetically tested, she was not going to rush the parents into anything. Demands to see Baby Eve or at least her parents would extend beyond the court of public opinion as epitomized by the press to be made in an actual court of law. Even with threats of contempt of court charges made against them if they did not disclose the whereabouts of Baby Eve, Clonaid executives refused to reveal the location of the child. Eventually, Boisselier announced to the press that Baby Eve would be cutting off contact with the Raelians and Clonaid so as to effectively disappear.

No conclusive proof was ever provided regarding Baby Eve despite the considerable hoopla surrounding her conception and the embarrassment that those connected to this alleged project had to know would result if they did not put their gold press latinum where their mouths were (to frame the issue in terms of *Star Trek* currency) should these genetic engineers not come forward with objective evidence. Dawson College Professor of Religious Studies Susan Palmer puts forward a number of viable theories as to what may have happened regarding Baby Eve in *Aliens Adored*: *Rael's UFO Religion* (189). These are the following possibilities.

First, Baby Eve could actually exist and is living in seclusion so that she might enjoy a life as normal as possible despite extraordinary beginnings and to protect her from imbalanced individuals pushed over the edge by the implications of a cloned child whatever those might be in any particular worldview. The next possibility as to why Clonaid leadership decided not to introduce Eve to the public was because the child was not physically well or even deformed. At the current stage of technological progress, the ethical prohibitions against human cloning are

in place in large part because, for every clone brought to physical maturation, a considerable number did not make it out alive beyond the early stages of development. While it may not be a major moral dilemma if cloned livestock embryos cease to exist before they ever come to be in a form the average motorist might recognize as they drive leisurely past farmland or pastures, such a casual attitude cannot be taken in regards to human beings even if they have not yet arrived at the point of self-awareness or even a primitive nervous system that responds reflexively to stimuli.

In other instances, clones that do make it to physical maturation often suffer from crippling deformities or related illnesses. For example, Dolly, the cloned sheep that in large part introduced this Pandora's Box of genetic research to the broader public, did not live the expected lifespan of a conventionally conceived sheep. The ewe's cells are alleged to have displayed signs of aging greater than the amount of time that Dolly had actually been alive.

The next possibility put forward by Professor Palmer and the one likely accepted by skeptics as to the most plausible explanation as to the whereabouts of Baby Eve is that the child never really existed. Either Boisselier was part of an elaborate publicity stunt or deceived by unscrupulous scientists she was working with from afar but whose work she never examined or verified directly.

Given of what has been seen thus far in regards to organizations and sects with beliefs in intelligences beyond humanity understood in terms of being extraterrestrials, it would be easy to assume that such groups and their way of thought have little impact upon those cautious and discerning enough to avoid them. That is not necessarily the case.

From the fiasco detailed of the cloned child that did not appear as promised, it would appear that those within the Raelian movement can barely get their own act together much less stand on the brink of world (or perhaps better stated) interplanetary conquest. However, even the ideas of groups that one knows to be based upon such blatant falsehoods patently absurd can exert influence on those areas where there is a degree of congruence with social tides gaining strength or pushing against cultural bulwarks that have grown disturbingly weak. For example, Raelians have distributed condemns outside of parochial schools in Quebec in protest of the Catholic Church's opposition to artificial birth control. Not only have the Raelians promoted the application of their materialist worldview in such a grassroots manner, but they have been lauded by the provincial authorities in Quebec for possessing a positive and healthful sexual ethic.

Even if the Raelians and groups like them never grow large enough in number to become the predominate religious authority, they can in earthly terms be quite successful in an environment where traditional religious authorities are in decline. This is precisely the situation in Quebec where the Raelian movement has its strongest presence. Bishops in the province have categorized the philosophical and moral climate there as "segmented, pluralistic, and secular among other degeneracies", prompting Susan Palmer to conclude, "In view of this precipitous decline of the Catholic Church, the appeal of Rael's godlike aliens with their anti-Catholic, pro-science, body conscious, and politically correct philosophy might be better understood (Palmer, 79)."

Thus far in this chapter, a number of groups have been presented that embrace extraterrestrials both as intelligences

from beyond this Earth and as sources of meaning for the adherents of these respective systems. Yet very few Americans, other than seeing Tom Cruise bounce giddily up and down on Oprah's sofa insisting that psychological imbalances are not actual mental conditions, have knowingly had encounters with adherents of formalized belief systems where intelligences other than humans are explicitly referred to as being from outerspace. However, most Americans have had contact with faiths that, even if one would not think of them as taking part in the deification of UFO's and extraterrestrials, do possess elements that are easily borrowed from this new religious phenomena or that might prompt the observer to recategorize such beliefs as perhaps straddling the boundaries between more traditional religions and those looking more to a technological spirituality of the future as the source of inspiration.

Having seen them peddling down the street on bicycles in white shirts and dress slacks or Mitt Romney's formalized manner of speech as he campaigns for the Republican presidential nomination, most Americans would not think of the Mormons as professing a faith that would place it in the orbit of religions where life is believed to exist on worlds or in realms physically similar to yet distinct from our own. Even at his most conspiratorial, one cannot recall Glenn Beck making claims as so outlandish as to be literally out of this world.

To the unsuspecting, Mormons are often perceived as not being all that different than the run of the mill Evangelicals in terms of what adherents of both creeds profess as social philosophy. In fact, the Mormon might even surpass the average born again believer in terms of behavioral standards in light of the things allowed to creep into the church these days (with nary an askance glance caste) such as

conspicuous tattoos, serial divorces, and the acceptance of those living together outside of marriage as if they are habitating under the sanction of a solemnized union like any other wedded couple. Despite these cosmetic similarities which inspire both the Evangelical and the avowed Mormon to be model citizens in the earthly kingdom of man, at their foundational core Biblical Christianity and Mormonism are fundamentally different from one another.

Christianity believes that the one God existed from eternity past in the form of three distinct persons. Deuteronomy 6:4 says, “Hear, O Israel, The Lord our God. The Lord is one.” John 1:1 says, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” Christians believe this Word spoken of to be Jesus Christ because it says in John 1:14, "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came down from the Father, full of grace and truth." Believers insist that the Holy Spirit is also a personage within the Godhead because of the baptismal formula spelled out in Matthew 20:19 where Jesus instructs the Apostles to conduct this right in the names of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Before the Incarnation of Christ, God did not have a body. John 4:24 teaches that, since God is a spirit, He must be worshiped in spirit and in truth. Not only is God spirit, but He is complete within Himself; not dependent or contingent on anyone or anything else. God says in Isaiah 44:6, "I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God." This idea of God's completeness and self-sufficiency are summarized by the name to which He revealed Himself to Moses in Exodus 3:14 of simply "I AM".

What the Mormon means when one presses him on the ontology of the professed God concept of the Church of Jesus Christ of Later Day Saints is markedly different. It does not take long to see how Mormonism fits nicely in the pantheon of UFO religions while holding onto a vocabulary for those so backwards that they prefer their religion to be mired in what passes for theism rather than flying saucers and little green men.

It must be pointed out that applying the word "theism" to Mormonism about stretches that idea nearly to its conceptual breaking point. And the discerning analyst or casual commentator will eventually realize that, in its fullest form, Mormonism does not qualify as monotheism.

In Mormonism, the being we refer to as God was once a man not unlike us. He was named "Elohim" (Carlson, 166). That no doubt sets off the red alert buzzer of those reading this aboard a starship as the Raelians also have an affinity for this term misappropriated from the Judeo-Christian Scriptures. And though one might not realize it at first glance given the sect's members' standard starched shirts, clean cut appearances and overall modest apparel, but the Mormon deity is every bit the sex maniac that the entities guiding the Raelians happen to be. Unlike the Christian God that brought the first humans into existence by creating Adam from the dust of the ground and breathing life into the sculpted form, the Mormon God brought each member of humanity into a preincarnate celestial existence though nearly endless sex with his numerous goddess wives.

Very interesting, it might be observed, but what does this have to do with the phenomena of extraterrestrial spirituality analyzed from a Christian perspective? According to Ron Carlson in *Fast Facts On False Teaching,* to the Mormon, our God is not the God of all the

cosmos but merely of our own planet (166). It would, therefore, follow that there would be other planets with other gods overseeing the development of worlds dedicated to their own unique plans and intentions.

In fact, our God is from a planet known to Mormons as "Kolob". To many, that sparks no phonetic recognition or association whatsoever. However, science fiction aficionados that delve into the backgrounds of their favorite series beyond the level of enjoying the sleek spaceships and laser battles cannot help but notice the similarity of the word "Kolob" to "Cobol", the name of the world on *Battlestar Galactica* from which the protagonists of the series believed the thirteen tribes of man originated before colonizing the wider universe.

That would not be the only similarity between the theology of this sect and this classic television series. In the episode titled "War Of The Gods", the crew of the *Galactica* tangled with a being remarkably similar to Satan in that this entity of formidable power and charisma fell from his original place of status and glory among his luminous brethren and came to crave the worship and adoration of the human race. As the protagonists strive to uncover the mystery of this character named Count Iblis, they are taken initially against their will aboard a spacecraft of crystalline appearance that evokes "heavenish" connotations with its pure white decor and soft choir-like tones playing in the background. Starbuck and Sheeba then encounter ethereal beings in shimmering garments. When asked if they might be angels, the entities respond, "As you are, we once were. As we are, you will become." Such dialog has been altered only slightly from the Mormon phraseology of "As man is, God once was, and as God is, man may become (Carlson, 165)."

Thus, as man moves upward according to the Mormon teaching of Eternal Progression, likely in a manner similar to the way young newlyweds often pack up and depart their parents' homes to establish their lives elsewhere, good Latter Day Saints will likely one eon fan out across the cosmos to planets of their own to raise the next batch of darling little godlings. And if each planet in turn has its own god, what is to prevent the Mormon from being duped into believing any potential visitors from beyond the Earth showing up on our planetary doorstep are simply God's in-laws stopping by for a visit or celestial house hunters mistakenly thinking there was a "For Rent" sign sticking in the Earth's front yard?

Mormonism is not the only sect outside of the religious groups initially perceived as having a connection to UFO's but in which this phenomena also plays a pivotal role. Another is none other than the Nation of Islam. It would be an understatement to say that the Nation of Islam often finds itself surrounded by controversy. Interestingly from the standpoint of analogy, one might make the case that the Nation of Islam is to the broader faith of Islam what the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints is to traditional Christianity. For while both of these groups claim a descent and share considerable vocabulary with the respective faith from which each claims derivation, each is distinctively different enough from their original sources to be considered unique creeds entirely.

As a world religion, Islam views itself as the successor of Judaism and Christianity as the conceptual vehicle through which the revelation of a monotheistic God is made to the world. Unlike Christianity which believes God became incarnate through the person of His Son Jesus Christ when Christ was born of the Virgin Mary, traditional Muslims do

not believe that God (whom they refer to by the Arabic term "Allah") has taken on human flesh. Unlike Judaism, Islam believes that the beneficence and favor of God is universal in the sense of being available to all that submit to His will as described most fully in the Koran and not bestowed to a greater degree on a single tribal or ethnic group. The Nation of Islam, despite sharing in part the name of the wider religion, actually turns each of these foundational Islamic tenets on their respective heads by recasting each with an unique interpretive spin.

The Nation of Islam was founded by an enigmatic figure known as Wallace Muhammad Fard whose most renowned follower was Elijah Poole, who changed his name to Muhammad as well following his conversion. These two met when Fard knocked on the door of Poole's Detroit home as an itinerant garment salesman (Lieb, 132). Through this encounter, Fard revealed to Poole that he (Fard) was from Mecca and had come to liberate Black people from the oppression inflicted upon them by the White race, who were themselves the product of genetic experimentation on the part of a dissident Meccan scientist named Yakub in his ongoing struggle against Allah (Lieb, 140). This brand of Islam, formulated initially by Fard and later expanded upon by Poole, drew inspiration from the Koran, the Bible, and selected works of Freemasonry (Lieb, 133).

Fard met Poole in 1930. By 1934, the movement had established a temple, a private school, and a paramilitary wing known as the Fruit of the Nation. It was also around this time that Fard mysteriously vanished. A number of theories have been put forward as to what happened to this cryptic figure. One contends that he was "taken out" as part of a FBI counterintelligence operation designed to keep

organizations considered subversive by this federal law enforcement agency in line. Others have hinted that Elijah Poole, who at that point had his name elevated to that of Muhammad to signify he had found favor as Fard's likely successor, may have had his mentor murdered in order to seize and solidify his control over the sect. A few others insist that Fard simply decided to retire to a life of seclusion and anonymity.

As fascinating as such an historical whodunit might happen to be, it pales in terms of the spin officially provided by the Nation of Islam regarding the disappearance of the movement's founder. According to Elijah Muhammad, Fard was not only the Madhi (a great world leader predicted to make his appearance before the End of Days and the Final Judgment also found in more orthodox expressions of Islam) but also Allah in human form having appeared on Earth to commence the liberation of his people, specifically Blacks of African descent once known as the nation of Shabazz (Lieb, 139). It was claimed that once Fard felt the Nation of Islam was in the hands of capable leadership (meaning Elijah Muhammad of course), Fard he could fade from the earthly scene to assume a more celestial role.

As in Christianity, this would not be the last time those deemed to be the faithful of this particular creed under examination could expect the one they believed to be the savior would intervene in history. The eschatology expounded by the Nation of Islam as set forth in the works of Elijah Muhammad entitled *Message To The Blackman* and *The Fall Of America* focuses significantly on a concept referred to as the Mother Plane or the Mother Wheel. Drawing on Ezekiel's vision of the wheel within a wheel as do a number of other theorists attempting to syncretize ancient texts such as the Old Testament with speculation in

modern times regarding craft from beyond the Earth, the Mother Plane could quite literally be viewed as the Deus ex Machina of this particular theology. For example, the Mother Wheel is the vehicle through which the world was brought into existence (Lieb, 162). It is also the device through which the present world will be brought to destruction in order to make way for the renewal of all things. This will take place when Black people are transported on board and the vessel will rain down what sounds like nuclear annihilation upon the White peoples of the Earth who are, to use an expression making Tim LaHaye untold millions, left behind.

To those having never before heard of this particular sectarian Islamic eschatology, the concept sounds very similar to that of a UFO. And the Nation of Islam has no qualms about incorporating interest in this phenomena as part of its official public discourse. As far back as the 1940's, the Nation of Islam would reference occasional UFO reports in expositions regarding the Mother Wheel. However, for failing to recognize the vehicle for what it was as the very conveyance of Allah in the form of Wallace Fard, Elijah Muhammad heaped condemnation upon the "devil scientists" (meaning Whites) for bringing the critical and analytical tendencies inherent to the most degenerate of the races to the study of this phenomena that only Elijah Muhammad was legitimately selected to reveal to mankind (Lieb, 162).

The Mother Wheel was not a teaching that the Nation of Islam quietly set aside with the passing of Elijah Muhammad in the attempt to attract a broader audience. In fact, belief in it continues and awareness of this peculiar doctrine has spread beyond the sect's membership. In a sense, the topic has been used as a bridge to those that

might otherwise be turned off by the Nation of Islam's ideology of racial supremacy.

As part of the group's Savior's Day event in 2010 where it was reported 10,000 were in attendance, a three hour expert panel discussion was convened for the purposes of establishing a dialog between the sect and the wider ufological community. The Nation of Islam's national assistant minister Ishmael Muhammad told AOL News that not only does the group believe that UFO's exist as divine or miraculous vehicles but that there is an advanced civilization on Mars as well as life on other planets (Speigel). It was detailed at the discussion how the sect believes that craft sited measuring smaller than the reported half-mile by half-mile dimensions of the Mother Wheel are likely part of the 1500 member squadron that deploy from the larger vessel and use it as a base of operations.

It cannot be denied that Louis Farrakhan loves to be at the heart of media controversy given the nature of the statements he has made over the years. And though one cannot be sure that he is also not manipulating the issues to his own advantage, Farrakhan not only presents himself as an individual sincerely interested in UFO's as an objective reality even if like everyone else he construes them through the prism of his own worldview. He also testifies to be a person whose life has been profoundly impacted by these vehicles and whatever beings might be operating them.

To the panel of experts assembled at the sect's Savior's Day Convention, Farrakhan deliberately expressed his gratitude to the researchers. He assured that, in the Nation of Islam, these analysts had not only allies and protectors but also benefactors willing to extend financial support.

Farrakhan can also himself serve as an anecdotal source regarding these craft if one views such testimony as

establishing the validity of such experiences going beyond the boundaries of agreed upon normality. Farrakhan claims that, in 1985, he was actually taken aboard the Mother Wheel. There, he heard the voice of Elijah Muhammad speaking to him through a cubical communications device. But whereas most taken aboard such vessels such as in the case of Barney and Betty Hill undergo highly traumatic experiences that could not be categorized as anything short of sexual molestation if the perpetrators inflicting it had been human beings, one might say Farrakhan's experience is remembered a bit more fondly.

On September 17, 1985 while visiting the ruins of a temple dedicated to the Meso-American Indian deity Quetzalcoatl, Farrakhan claims to have had an encounter where he was transported by a beam of light (in a manner similar to a tractor beam in popular science fiction) onto one of the smaller wheels that descended from the larger Mother Wheel (Lieb, 208). At no point during the encounter did Farrakhan get a direct glimpse of his abductors, and when the voice of Elijah Muhammad spoke to him, it was a disembodied one transmitted through a speaker device. As in the case of countless other abductees, this would not be the only time that Louis Farrakhan would get to interact with the entities that apparently took such a direct interest in him.

Following his initial mystical conference call aboard the Mother Wheel, Farrakhan would come to be in what could be considered regular contact with this ethereal vehicular conveyance. In fact, one might say it even followed him like some kind of saucer shaped pet. For example, during his October 1985 Madison Square Garden appearance, sixty of the smaller wheels that use the Mother Wheel as a base of operations were seen in the area. Since unidentified

aerial phenomena manifest themselves so regularly wherever Farrakhan appears such as in the American Southwest, the Middle East, and the Orient, this cleric with a flair for the dramatic proclaimed, "I am telling America that wherever I am the Wheel is (Lieb, 211)." Such a declarative utterance cannot help but evoke in the mind of the student of the New Testament Christ's declaration in John 14:9 that those that have seen Him have seen the Father. Farrakhan's own claims are no less grandiose.

As stated previously, many come away from their encounter with phenomena categorized as beyond the boundaries of conventional terrestrial experience psychologically and even physically shattered for the remainder of their earthly lives. Farrakhan's have, in a sense, left him as full of himself as a human being can possibly get. The doctrine of the Mother Wheel is drawn in part from a passage in the Book of Ezekiel. As such, Michael Lieb writes, "As the wheel accompanied the Son of Man everywhere in prophecy, so it accompanies the new seer in the modern world. Like Ezekiel, Farrakhan is connected to the Throne of God (211)." In other words, Farrakhan is like a Christic or Messianic figure to his followers on the current stage of history.

In this chapter, a number of belief systems have been examined that hold as a central tenet that the phenomena known popularly as UFO's are not simply visitors from another planet. Rather, these beings are on a mission to Earth to present to those among mankind receptive to these outsiders a new or expanded revelation regarding ultimate truth. Thus far, the creeds examined have been embraced by those most enthusiastic about the expanded horizons possible through an awareness brought about through interaction with intelligences claiming to be from beyond

this world.

Left to themselves, despite the enthusiasm these groups exhibit in pursuit of this question, their numbers would be of an insufficient number to exert an appreciable influence upon a population grounded on a solid Christian foundation. In such a situation, these perspectives under examination would at best be a religious curiosity for highly specialized academic researchers or a mission field for evangelists feeling a calling to minister to a particular group or subculture. However, since the contemporary world is anything but settled in terms of its underlying theological and philosophical identity, the question of life beyond this world and its spiritual implications will become one of the great apologetic challenges of the twenty-first century and for whatever amount of time remains until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Chapter 3:
Meanwhile Back On Earth
(The Progression Of Worldviews Leading To The Acceptance Of Extraterrestrials)

At the time of this writing in the early decades of the twenty-first century, to the unsuspecting it seems unlikely that extraterrestrials could serve as the basis of an influential new world religion or at least a popular form of budding spirituality. Of the groups examined thus far, the adherents of these are for the most part along the periphery of social acceptance and interpersonal success. Even more importantly, the beliefs espoused by these sects differ among themselves in ways as significant as the incompatibilities of the theological distinctives of the already existing world relgions.

For example, the Raelians revel (one might say wallow) in man's nature as a sexual being while the Heaven's Gate loathed the physical component of the species to such an extent that the group will be remembered in the pages of history for at first mutilating their bodily organs specifically identified with carnal pleasure through self-castration and then by ultimately destroying their earthly lives altogether through ritual suicide. The Nation of Islam has traditionally been an Afrosupremacist, anti-White sect. The Mormons are often denigrated as the whitest of the White. At one time early in its history, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints looked down its nose at those of darker pigmentation for not having sided with God in the preincarnate war against Satan.

However, as in the case of greater ecumenical cooperation between a number of the major religions of the world, under certain circumstances there could very well

come a time when assorted belief systems centered upon UFO's and extraterrestrials could set aside doctrinal differences and emphasize commonalities for the purposes of providing the planetary community a sense of perspective and assurance amidst a crisis that might be described as nothing short of apocalyptic. Even now, among the movements described there exists evidence of this kind of framework and dialog being set in place. For example, Louis Farrakhan is not only the head of the Nation of Islam but he has also had an association with the Church of Scientology (Schlikerman).

If the wider ecumenical movement is being used as a framework as to what might happen among those groups that look to life beyond the Earth as a source of spiritual inspiration, one should also expect to see at least two approaches manifest themselves as to how adherents of these sects might respond to the melding and interaction of their respective interpretations as these kinds of worldviews fan out across the cultural and intellectual landscapes. As in the case of the ecumenical movement seeking cooperation and dialog between the traditional religions of the world, there will be members of these respective UFO belief systems that will deemphasize their dogmatic particulars for the sake of broadening the perceptions of humanity to the metaphysical meaning provided by the prospect of life from beyond the Earth.

On the other hand, scholars, academics, and assorted religious professionals should also expect a number within established UFO sects to remain aloof from any amorphous "exo-spirituality" that might develop. As in the case of more literal or fundamentalist adherents of established world religions, a number might prefer --- to borrow Christian phraseology --- the distinctives of the faith handed

down to the saints or, in this case perhaps, more technically space cadets. Such devotees might come to view a cosmic universalism as a dilution of the specific creeds they held to so tenaciously in times when the broader public did not herald those looking to the stars as honored prophets with a message rescuing humanity from pending destruction but rather as borderline mental cases one evaluation away from being committed to a psychiatric institution. Furthermore, from what has been presented thus far, those embracing alternative spirituality are often as every bit as much denominationally partisan as religious enthusiasts whose beliefs could be categorized as "Terra-centric".

As fascinating as an examination of the squabbles likely to erupt among the highly-detailed interpretations of extraterrestrial spirituality might be such as to whether Greys, Nordics, or whatever other variety of alien might be humanity's interplanetary savior, going much further into that discussion alters the trajectory of this chapter's intended purpose of detailing how the intellectual and cultural climates are now such that a once fringe perspective could be on the verge of becoming one of civilization's most influential worldviews. To better understand where the world in general and the West in particular might be headed it might be a good idea to examine where we came from in terms of worldviews as a society and the path taken bringing us to where we are today in terms of the philosophical landscape. It has been said that those that do not know history are doomed to repeat it. By examining these peeks and valleys, the apologist has a better chance of arresting the downward trend most discerning Americans believe the nation to be on or to rescue a number of individuals from eternal damnation before the decay all around reaches a critical mass of no return.

Julius Caesar, in his account of his escapades in Gaul, noted how that region was divided into three parts. Something similar might be said of the major epochs of the prevailing cultural currents in the West. Before the revelation of the one true God radiated outward towards the uttermost parts of the Earth from the Holy Land, for the most part with the exception of the Jewish people the West would be what would broadly be considered pagan. The next phase following the pagan was the Christian. The Christian was in turn followed by the Modern and the Postmodern.

To the contemporary Christian ear, the term "pagan" carries with it connotations of gratuitous violence and depraved sexuality. In part, such a reputation is justified on the grounds of the infamous excesses such as those noted in the declining days of Greece and Rome. For example, during that era, it was not uncommon to make sport of the shedding of human blood as epitomized by the Roman gladiatorial games.

Paganism did, however, go beyond that. Though existing prior to Christianity as the predominate form of religious belief and expression among Gentiles, paganism was not conceptually formulated as such until the rise of and in antithesis to Christianity. According to Glenn Sunshine in *Why You Think The Way You Do: The Story Of Western Worldviews From Rome To Home*, the term "pagan" is derived from the Latin words "pagus" meaning "the countryside" and "pagni" meaning "rural people" (20). This particular dichotomy came about because, at the time, Christianity was a religion concentrated in urban centers whereas those living in the countryside were more likely to hold on to the traditional ways a bit longer as the process of Christianization fanned out across the face of the

Mediterranean and eventually into Europe.

Often, those not accustomed to the shades and intricacies of Christianity are bewildered by its sheer number of denominations and various theological interpretations. Technically, the same can be said of beliefs classified under the banner of paganism. Before the rise of Christianity, each culture had its own distinct set of gods (though there was often an intriguing degree of similarity in these figures and the myths about them transcending particular societies). Even within these cultures, there was a myriad of gods with particular cults and schools of devotion drawn to the adoration of specific deities presiding over a particular aspect of nature or existence.

It was this connection between the forces of nature to which man was subject to the whims of and this realm of the spirit that led to the establishment of imperial or national systems of religion. The purpose of these rituals was not so much about preparing the individual for the next world or to make them a better person per say but rather about placating the entities believed to be behind the phenomena manifesting in the physical world. Glenn Sunshine writes, "Crops could be destroyed or not ripen...volcanoes, earthquakes, floods, and storms could end their lives or condemn...to a slow death by starvation...Is it any wonder, then, that they saw in nature a source of transcendence, which they needed to appease in order to survive (21)." An individual's relationship with the divine as we now understand such a notion in light of Christian theological assumptions did not enter all that significantly into the religious equation of that day.

With official religious belief so intertwined with social well-being or misfortune in the clash of empires, kingdoms and tribes, it came to be seen that those powers prevailing in

arenas such as the battlefield must (it was reasoned) possess the greater favor of the more powerful gods. Thus, when a weaker nation was conquered, it was only natural that they would come to accept these new gods into their respective pantheons. For example, it has been hypothesized that the Olympians were the deities brought with tribes moving into the Greek peninsula that displaced the Titans who had been believed in by the original inhabitants of the region. The Greek and Roman pantheons so meshed together in their intertwining that today students of the Classical world often refer to these characters from these legends and myths with interchangeable names. For example, Zeus (Greek) is identified with Jupiter (Roman), Ares (Greek) with Mars (Roman), and Hermes (Greek) with Mercury (Roman).

Recognition of the multiplicity of deities came to be thought of as an essential component of a good social order to such an extent that not only did Rome require conquered people to bow to or burn a pinch of incense to the emperor as a god on earth but often Rome in turn would extend a degree of recognition to the spirits honored by these subject nations as well. Glenn Sunshine writes, "Adding one or more deities to the religious system was not a problem; in fact more educated people thought of this as being broadminded ...virtuous...cosmopolitan... People saw this inclusiveness as a source of strength for the Roman Empire...the more deities that supported Rome, the better (23)."

The thing was, this kind of system did not do all that much to fulfill the spiritual and emotional needs of the individual as a person. In fact, often these deities were little better than mere mortals in terms of personal conduct. In certain ways, these divinities may have even been worse than the average workaday pagan who, according to

Romans 2:14-15, at least had the law written upon his heart to an extent to prick the conscience in cases where internal witness had not been muted through repeated violation. For example, Zeus hardly served as an example of marital fidelity towards his wife Hera. For this deity had numerous affairs with mortals catching his fancy resulting in numerous elicit hybrid offspring, the most famous of which was probably Hercules.

As a result of such an existential crisis of the spirit, a complex cultural process came into play that would result in the next great worldview epoch. Not unlike what is transpiring in our own day, the prosperity that accrued to Rome as a result of an ethos built upon early virtues such as duty and prudence eventually came to undermine the character especially of those in social classes with considerable time for leisure unprepared for the temptations brought about as a result of abundance. Rome became an extremely oversexed society. Gluttony and debauchery were rampant. What would be considered carnal pornographic images adorned nearly every conceivable artifact of material culture from pottery to the walls of domiciles. Despite the libidinous activity going on all around, one would have thought the population would have expanded. However, quite the opposite was true.

The Romans became so engrossed in the pursuit of these lusts that they had little desire to put up with the consequences of such unbridled virility. Abortion became rampant and the population plummeted. Yet at what seemed one of the dimmest periods of the light of the West, things were about to brighten in ways they never had before.

The Christian philosophy of history holds that often God works through the vilest of situations that have resulted

from man's depravity in order to bring about the fulfillment of His higher purpose. As such, the world was primed for the expanse of God's revelation beyond the Jewish people of Israel by the time of Rome's decline as a source of spiritual strength and cultural vitality. Whereas the Romans valued administrative acumen, the Greeks intellectual aptitude and the Jewish identity based itself upon belonging to the chosen nation of God, the Christian worldview at its finest balanced each of these in a way with the potential to transcend them all in a universal manner that still respected these broad categories of cultural organization and endeavor. At first, this new creed appealed to those on the periphery of how success was construed at the time.

Borrowing heavily from the Jewish tradition in which its founder and His earliest disciples were steeped, the Christian worldview emphasized the value of each individual created in the image of the one true God. And since man was a reflection of this image and bought with the righteousness of Christ who shed His blood, died, and rose from the dead so that the redeemed might enjoy an eternity with Him in Heaven, the pleasures of the flesh were not something to be wallowed in like an animal unable to control itself no matter how strong these temptations might be to all born with a sin nature. Instead, such delights were to be enjoyed as God intended within the confines of matrimony for the sake of the children brought about as a result of such physical couplings, the emotional well being of the partners involved, and to serve as an example of the profound union between Christ and His bride known as the Church composed of all professing belief in Him.

Unlike Judaism, one did not have to belong theoretically to a particular ethnic group or to adopt its culture wholesale to become part of the new covenant open to any who would

believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved. Granted, things would not be perfect under a civilization that took for part of its ultimate foundation the building blocks of the Christian worldview. In time, a number of the things done in its name, often though as a result of a misapplication of these principles, would be one of the justifications invoked by the critics and opponents of the faith for abandoning the creed altogether.

Amidst the chaos of the disintegration of the Roman empire and what would emerge out of that, the Christian worldview would at least attempt to provide a sense of stability despite the trying conditions. For much of the Medieval culture that would emerge would endeavor, even if the effort fell short of its intended goal, to reflect these Christian principles. This in part led to an increase in the value of human life compared to that exhibited in many pagan cultures. For example, though treated in a manner in certain respects below what would be considered acceptable today, overall Christianity elevated the status of women. As co-creations made in the image of God along with men, Biblical Christianity viewed women as having their own distinct worth and purpose as individuals. No longer was their existential status dependent upon their value as a man's property as a sex object even as a wife, concubine, or prostitute.

In fact, in comparison, Christianity did more to elevate the quality of human life throughout its history than nearly every other worldview and philosophy. Early on, this was seen in the tendency of early Christians to render assistance to those suffering outbreaks of contagious disease whereas the pagans often fled from such situations (Sunshine, 44). This was the result of Christ's ethic of compassion combined with the Christian's more fully developed view of

a rewarding afterlife which softened the instinctual fear of death.

Likewise, Christianity also contributed overall to making life better here in this world as well. Though the primary function of the Church is to spread the good news of the Gospel in teaching what men must do in order to be saved, the principles flowing from that message and institution coalesce into a comprehensive worldview that impacts all of life. Unlike Gnosticism which taught that the natural world in which humanity finds itself is a realm inherently inferior to the realm of the spirit in which man was intended to dwell and to which a select elite will one day eventually return, the Biblical tradition held that the creation itself possessed a goodness according to the opening chapter of Genesis.

This realization coupled with the notion that all are created in the image of God inspired the notion, prominent among reformers and innovators from a variety of Christian perspectives and traditions throughout history, that efforts should be undertaken to understand the world that God created so as to more fully worship Him as well as to ease the suffering and ignorance of man. The world might be marred by sin, but it still possessed a significant degree of wonder. As a result, Christians played a pivotal role in establishing institutions that the contemporary world takes for granted today and has nearly forgotten the initial religious motivations for establishing such as hospitals, universities, and publishing.

Presenting the Christian worldview in such a positive glowing light might spark one to observe that, if the system of belief is all that wonderful, then why is not that the end of the story with history having reached a triumphal conclusion? If anything, from what we see around us in

terms of the culture and morality prevailing in the most influential of social institutions, Christianity's best days seem to be behind it with a slide underway back down into what more resembles the debaucheries and excesses of the pagan world. G.K. Chesterton once remarked that the one fundamental Christian doctrine that is alone proved by the headlines of newspapers and the pages of history is that of the depravity of man. Though the fulfillment of man is to be found ultimately in Christ living in one's heart and adhering to the principles of a Biblical worldview, as fallen creatures even the redeemed are unable to do so perfectly so long as they trod this earth.

Unless there is a conscientious effort to place a check upon and correct the errors that accumulate over time in both individual lives and governing social structures, eventually this unrecognized sin accumulates and skewers the trajectory of entire civilizations. This can be to such an extent that even actions undertaken in the name of the correct worldview can end up countering the principles espoused by the worldview. One is reminded of Isaiah 64:6 which reminds that our righteousness is as “filthy rags”.

Christianity went from the time of its origins as the religion embraced by the downtrodden and outcasts of society to not only being that of the respectable establishmentarians but also the conceptual framework and justification through which entrenched elites often maintained a hold on power at nearly any cost. One of the profound strengths of the Christian worldview is the belief that an infinitely powerful, wise and just God created the universe with such a degree of order that everything within the cosmos has been assigned its place and function by no less than God Himself. This idea was especially applied to society and the individual human life.

Within the ideal Christian kingdom or empire, one was divinely placed within one of three broad classes or estates. Those who fought were the nobility, those who prayed were the clergy, and those who worked consisted of everybody else that either toiled the soil such as the serfs and peasants legally bound to the land or a number of craftspeople belonging to certain guilds. Since God in His wisdom had placed the individual where He had intended them to be, it was considered a scandalous affront towards the Almighty to aspire to a station in life other than the one into which one had been born.

Though the system might even seem romantic in theory with each level protected by the one above it in exchange for loyalty and everyone striving together to fulfill their role in the great master plan, its overemphasis on the authority of intermediary hierarchies at the expense of the individual proved to be part of its undoing. The system would come to be challenged by two responses that each thought the best way to bring about renewal and advancement was through first going back to what would be considered original sources. It was just that each was differing in what they considered the ultimate source. The intellectual currents that would rise to challenge the assumptions of the Medieval world were the Renaissance and the Reformation.

The Renaissance was sparked through a reacquaintance with the Greco-Roman sources of antiquity brought about through increased contact with the Muslim world. Through the study of this literature, its enthusiasts came to question the enforced dictates of an ecclesiastical hierarchy that had grown too concerned with maintaining a hold on its own status and prestige in the name of preparing the greatest number for the next life, which for most people came considerably sooner than to what those now living in the

developed world are today accustomed. To adherents of the Renaissance perspective, this world and life in it were worthy of consideration as ends in themselves. This emphasis upon man, his endeavors, and improving upon these to the greatest extent possible was known as Humanism. And though at that time the term was not quite the synonym for a militant and activist form of unbelief that it is today, the wheels to a degree were set in motion by this movement that would ultimately result in Western civilization being less explicitly Christian in terms of its overall prevailing orientation.

Though the Italian Renaissance is recalled in the public consciousness for its more earthly manifestations such as art and poetic literature, the so-called Humanistic academic methodology of seeking inspiration by going back to original sources took a different route in the northern parts of Europe. For whereas the Italian part of the movement tended to look towards the Greco-Roman background of the Mediterranean past, scholars in the North tended to get back to the Biblical roots of the Christian faith. By reemphasizing Scripture rather than the organizational traditions that had accrued onto the religion in the centuries since its founding and textual codification, thinkers such as Martin Luther, Phillip Melanchthon, and John Calvin realized that the church was in serious need of reform if the Bride of Christ was to be made upright, forgiven once more, and prevented from taking additional steps into what they considered spiritual adultery.

What the Reformers did for the Christian faith was to reprioritize the emphasis back to the individual's direct relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ with good works serving as evidence of salvation rather than a necessity in order to be granted it. This idea was fraught

with a number of implications in terms of worldview. For starters, though the institution would still play a pivotal cultural role as the assembled body of believers and often the venue through which the Christian learned the specifics of the faith, in the minds of those adopting this renewed perspective, the church institutional would no longer be viewed as the dispenser of the means of grace. As such, whether for good or ill, other institutions such as the state and nation were elevated in terms of prestige and power.

Granted, a door had been reopened with the possibility of granting man more freedom than he could have ever before imagined while bringing him closer still to a truer and more direct relationship with his Creator and Redeemer. The thing of it was, when there was so much riding on the line in terms of sociocultural power (as well as formidable intellects and personalities psychologically vested in insisting upon that something so fundamental as their respective conceptions of God were indeed the right one) it became very easy for each side to lose sight of the loftier principles for which each originally stood up to defend. This resulted in what historian Glenn Sunshine wittingly refers to in *Why You Think The Way You Do* as "Killing For The Prince Of Peace" (103). It is easy to take sides in regards to these conflicts if one is devout dependent upon where one comes down along the Protestant/Catholic divide. However, if one strives to retain a sense of historical objectivity in regards to the total scope of this period, one has to admit at times the response on either side of this dispute was not exactly always the finest hour of the Bride of Christ.

For example, in Protestant settings where early founders made appeals to the sanctity of individual conscience to decide matters of faith, it was not uncommon to legally

penalize those refusing membership in formalized state churches. The situation within Catholic lands and territories was pretty much the same as authorities there also felt it was a Christian obligation to make those unwilling to recant as uncomfortable as possible. Eventually, both sides would come to blows in a series of conflicts known as the Thirty Years War where, in the name of international intrigue and rivalry all wrapped up in the veneer of enthusiastic religious devotion, nearly a third of the population living within the Holy Roman Empire was wiped out. To this day in Germany, the conflict is remembered as being more devastating than World War I and World War II despite the heavy losses suffered during those particular conflagrations that would cast their respective shadows across the geopolitical face of the twentieth century (Sunshine, 107).

This particular spilling of unfathomable gallons of human blood at the commencement of the Modern Era would have a profound impact on the intellectually sensitive and astute of that time as well. Thinkers in the years following this historical tragedy wanted to avoid the same thing from happening again in the future but were not quite ready to turn their back on God or at least the acknowledgment that God got the cosmos started. Intellectuals of this particular philosophical inclination came to be known as Deists. Having seen their world shattered as a result of a heated dispute over insistence as to what side had the minutest details regarding God the most correct, the European intelligentsia set out in the hopes of establishing a number of assumptions or principles that all rational men could agree upon. At first, this did not necessarily result in blatant unbelief or an outright denial of fundamental Christian doctrines.

A number of the principles expounded by Deism are shared by classical forms of theism such as Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. For example, Deists believe that the universe was created by God. This God created the universe to operate in accord with fixed physical and moral laws which man as a rational creature could deduce through study and reflection upon the world around him and as a way to come to a knowledge regarding the Creator.

This was in keeping with the spirit of the Scientific Revolution, one of the goals of which was to think what a finite mind could of God's thoughts after Him. However, other than an agreement that God created an ordered world, classic theism (especially of a Christian variety) and Deism parted company. For example, to the Deist, the system of laws created by God is so complete that there is no additional need for a theoretically perfect God to intervene in the universe. This is why Deism is often known as the clockwork view of the universe as the cosmos is like a giant mechanism of cause and effect inspired by an understanding of Newtonianism. This is fraught with a number of worldview implications going considerably beyond a number of billiard balls bouncing off one another, a popular illustration often utilized to explain these basic principles of the famed laws of motion.

James Sire points out in *The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog* that these assumptions of Deism put it at odds with orthodox Christianity. For example, unlike the God of the Bible, in Deism, "God is thus not immanent, not fully personal...and not providential (44)." God created the universe, but does not interact with or relate to His creation from a standpoint of what would be considered love. For if God is not really a "He" or even a "She" but more of an "It", how can God extend love? Love

implies the deliberate conscientious choice or awareness of an intellect. John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son.." If God is not a person, neither can He be considered our Father who art in Heaven as He is described in Matthew 6:9 in the opening invocation of the Lord's Prayer.

From this notion of God's detachment from the cosmos and the inability of the deity to relate to the Creation on a personal level leads a number of other assumptions that put Deism at odds with Christianity. For example, James Sire points out that, since Deism assumes the universe operates as an uniform system of cause and affect, it is a closed system without the possibility of miracles (44). This is in complete contradistinction to Christianity which holds that, though the universe usually operates in accord with natural laws created by God, He takes an active interest in His creation. At times in pursuit of His purposes, God can even intervene in such a fashion that appears to our finite senses and perceptions to be violations of the standard operating procedures of the universe. This point of contention between orthodox Christianity and Deism was such an impasse that Deist Thomas Jefferson (despite penning those profound truths in America's Declaration of Independence about all men being endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights) himself edited a version of the Bible in which this quintessential American renaissance man expunged evidence of the miraculous from the pages of Scripture and left behind only the ethical content.

A case could be made that a good deal of the motivation behind many of the false religions consists of the effort of man attempting to convince himself that he is not in need of a savior that lived the perfect life that he could not and paid the price for his transgressions. Deism is no different. In

postulating a universe where God does not care for His creation on a personal level and created it in such a way as to preclude the possibility of intervening on our behalf, Deism denies the possibility of a divine savior extending the opportunity of rescue to any willing to accept His terms. However, that is of little concern to those of Deism's persuasion as they counsel those no doubt shocked by this unsettling claim.

According to James Sire, the Deist believes that "The cosmos...is understood to be in its normal state; it is not fallen or abnormal (46)." Thus, there is not even a need for a Savior as there is really nothing that mankind needs to be saved from. There is only ignorance that can be corrected through education and the improvement of the material condition.

To the Christian, nothing could be farther from the truth. Romans 8:22 instructs that all of the creation groans in travail as a result of sin having entered the universe. And even if one is reluctant to invoke Holy Writ as evidence to counter this foremost modernist assumption, G.K. Chesterton quipped that the reality of sin is the one foundational doctrine of the Christian faith proven in the daily news. All around, only the pathologically detached would fail to notice that there is profound evil in the world. Even when things are at their best, we cannot help but feel that things are somehow askew and not quite what they ought to be. However, if all was truly right with the world as the Great Architect of the Universe intended as postulated by the Deists and ritualized by the Free Masons, the human soul or rationality would not be able to cry out in anguish at those circumstances or states of being that are an affront to the individual at the deepest level if the what is is no different than the what is ought.

Though Deism remains to this day a perspective found among those who grant recognition to a rationalist "God of the Equations" similar to that espoused by famed former-unbeliever Anthony Flew in his final days, the worldview primarily served as a bridge between the two dominant epochs of Western intellectual history. For example, of Deists, James Sire writes, "These men held a number of related views, but not all held every doctrine in common...Some deists, like Voltaire were hostile to Christianity; some like Locke were not (44)." On one side of the Deist divide, the student of history and philosophical affairs could find those more favorably disposed towards a Judeo-Christian worldview even if they did not embrace Jesus as Lord and Savior. This could be seen particularly in regards to America's Founding Fathers such as Jefferson, Franklin, and, more disputatiously, Washington. The other strand of Deism was more openly hostile and contemptuous of traditional orthodox expressions of theism. This was particularly true of the stream of Deism that would intoxicate those participating in the French Revolution. One famous quip attributed to Dennis Diderot mused how man would not be free until the last king was strangled with the entrails of the last priest.

As can be seen, the deeper one moved into Deism (especially in social contexts where ecclesiastical affiliation was something imposed upon an individual) the less one viewed God and traditional formulations of religion as sustaining supports but more as stifling hindrances at worst or as something to be moved beyond at best with a cursory nod given to as man’s perceptions awakened to brighter and broader vistas of enlightenment. In fact, the Enlightenment was the very name that would come to describe that particular era. Eventually, it became respectable and even

avant guard among the intellectual classes pushing culture to the limits of acceptability or even desiring to topple the existing sociopolitical order altogether to espouse some variety of outright unbelief. The outright denial of the existence of God is, of course, atheism and it is closely related to and buttressed by the notions of naturalism.

Both theism and Deism held that God created the world but differed on the extent of His involvement with the cosmos. Theism contended that God loved His handiwork. Deism, on the other hand, held that deity brought the universe into existence but either choose not to or was unable to intervene in the Creation.

The intellectual development that allowed the cultured despisers of religion to move freely in the open and among the wider swathes of the educated was the popularization of evolution through the works of Charles Darwin such as *The Origin Of Species* and *The Ascent Of Man*. According to Darwin, whose formal education had been in theology rather than the natural sciences but who had turned away from pursuing a career in the ministry after the death of a daughter, the diversity of species the scientist studies in the world today did not spring into existence fully formed as they are now known. Rather, these organisms were the result of numerous happenstance mutations resulting in adaptations giving the organisms possessing them an advantage in the cutthroat competition of survival of the fittest. In turn, these cumulative improvements would be passed on genetically to the survivor's offspring which would in time lead to such differentiation that the descendants could not even be considered as part of the same species as the far distant ancestor. Eventually, all of life on Earth could be accounted for as a result of this process that now had a rationally plausible mechanism as to

how it could transpire. Coupled with a related theory in Geology known as uniformitarianism developed by Charles Lyell that the physical features that characterize the landscape are not necessarily the result of catastrophic events such as the Flood detailed in the Book of Genesis but rather the result of processes transpiring at the same rate for millions and millions of years, the modern thinker had at his fingertips justification for denying the existence of God as well.

There was more at stake than merely the spin put on the experimental outcomes in the science lab or classroom. These presuppositions would come to influence nearly every other intellectual and cultural undertaking of those that would embrace them and even impact the lives of millions that did not. Francis Schaeffer observed in *A Christian Manifesto*, "From the material-energy, chance concept of final reality, final reality is...silent as to values...There is no way to ascertain 'the ought' from 'the is' (48)." Of such a situation, Schaeffer concluded, "It is a natural result of really believing that the basic reality of all things is merely material energy, shaped into its present form by impersonal chance (48)."

And the modern era has paid the price for these conclusions ever since they were first cogitated. The so-called "modernist project" commenced with the hopes of finding a basis other than religion for those social conventions that seemed to work while being able to set aside those that seemed to hinder the fulfillment, enjoyment, or expression of mankind. Alister McGrath points out in *Intellectuals Don't Need God & Other Modern Myths* that Darwinism was not so much accepted because of its superiority as an explanation for dispassionately collected scientific data but because the theory confirmed

already held assumptions regarding social progress (161).

Many latching onto Darwinism did not necessarily do so for reasons of scientific altruism. The Christian Research Institute's Hank Hanegraaff in *The Face That Demonstrates The Farce Of Evolution* recounts an incident when renowned defender of naturalism Julian Huxley was asked why it was that the so-called educated classes were so quick to embrace the theory of evolution. This foremost twentieth century thinker responded that it was because the concept of a creator God interfered with the sexual proclivities of the elites (22).

But while some latched onto evolution to justify the free-wheeling lifestyle of the proverbial sex, drugs, and rock-and-roll because in a naturalistic universe we must "eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow we die", others harnessed this set of presuppositions regarding the origins of life as a way to exert near total control over human existence in order to remold society and the individual in compliance with ideals certainly not in keeping with the highest aspirations of Judeo-Christian theism. Such a tendency was epitomized in the totalitarian ideologies of Nazism and Communism --- both forms of socialism pushed to its logical outcome. Both ideologies utilized evolution to justify different assumptions but ended up in disturbingly similar places.

Nazism saw evolution as justification for its programs of racial eugenics and superiority. Since man is little better than an animal, over time those with the superior genetic makeup are the ones that succeed in reproducing and those with similar traits or and dispositions coalesce together to form nations and even races or ethnicities. In a Nazi context, this meant that the various racial or ethnic groups were locked in conflict with one another over finite

amounts of territory and resources. This was often accomplished by subverting the genetic purity of the superior group in order to gain the upper hand. Since, in the Nazi worldview, it was the racial stock that served as the biological building block of a strong and vibrant nation that ultimately mattered, it was of little consequence what happened to the individual in the quest to secure additional living space (or Lebensraum) or in liquidating those hindering the preferred breed from achieving what the leadership considered the destiny of primal naturalistic drives and ambitions.

Those wanting to protect Darwin from the stain of one of history's darkest episodes will retort that he cannot be blamed if a profoundly disturbed group of individuals such as the Nazi hierarchy distorted his scientific claims. After all, violence perpetrated upon one group by another for simply not being part of a particular group has plagued mankind from the earliest days of the species long before Darwin ever came along. However the very subtitle of *The Origin Of Species* is *The Preservation Of The Favored Races In The Struggle For Life*. And it is not only those of a religious inclination noticing a link between Nazism and Darwinism. In *The Face That Demonstrates The Farce Of Evolution*, physical anthropologist Sir Arthur Keith is quoted as observing, "The German Fuehrer...is an evolutionist; he has consistently sought to make the practices of Germany conform to the theory of evolution (28)."

In the official propaganda of their respective movements and because of the devastating war between the Soviet Union and Germany in the late 1930's and early 1940's, one would assume that Marxist Communism would be built upon a foundation profoundly distinct from that of National

Socialism or Fascism. It may then come as a bit of a surprise that Marx was nearly as much of an enthusiast for Darwinism as Hitler. But whereas Hitler and the Nazis placed particular emphasis on Darwin's propagation of the genetic vitality of the race through the survival of the fittest, Marx took delight in the theory of evolution as a way of justifying his theory of revolutionary advances in social structure in relation to the means of production. For example, just as in the biological realm life went from single celled organisms up through reptiles to mammals and ultimately to man, a similar progression could be observed in regards to the sociopolitical economy as it transitioned (often violently) from hunting and gathering, to simple agriculture, through feudalism, to mercantile and industrial capitalism, into socialism and ultimately Communism.

Since Marx and his system were also militantly atheist (going so far as to categorize religion as the opiate of the masses in that belief in the Almighty and an accompanying belief in the afterlife kept the oppressed docile and compliant), Marx no doubt found favor with evolution as an alternative explanation as to the material origins and development of the universe. Those political figures that would attempt to implement his social philosophy no doubt favored the naturalistic basis of Darwinism as the Marxist worldview ultimately concluded there was no authority existing transcendent to the process of dialectical materialism propelling the revolution onward and allowing the state to eliminate those standing in the way as inconvenient impediments.

One must admit, the grandiose promises of many of modernism’s streams were quite impressive if one was inclined to believe all the hype. However, each and every one of these variant interpretations not only left gaping

holes in each of the hearts of the respective adherents but also ended prematurely the lives of untold millions. In fact, by the closing decades of the twentieth century, Western civilization seemed to be so exhausted that, on the whole, the culture seemed ready to call it quits at the prospect of modernism all together.

The great promise of modernism and its underlying quest had been to find a basis for a shared consensus apart from traditional religious belief so that all irrespective of personal creed might enjoy the benefits of a harmonious and fulfilling society. However, instead of taking a step back to consider how culture might be able to have a broadly Biblical basis without infringing upon the consciences and liberties of those that might not embrace or espouse that particular theological outlook, the stiff necked in positions of influence (particularly in academia) dropped the pretense of the existence of detached absolute objectivity and any accompanying universal values that did not exist altogether. Yet what postmodernism takes away with one hand --- namely that an objective reality and fixed values exist --- it attempts to impose even more vigorously with the other. It does so by insisting, interestingly, that such things do not exist.

As James Sire points out in *The Universe Next Door*, postmodernism contends that what is perceived as the self is all that the individual is capable of knowing and we cannot come into a comprehension of the ultimate apart from ourselves (178). At best, all we have and can hope for are linguistic elaborations that attempt to maximize survival, opportunity, or pleasure for either the individual or the greatest number. Any constructive narrative is nothing more than a power play and to insist that one theory is above or overarching another is the greatest form of

oppression. That is, of course, with the exception of the postmodern metanarrative.

It is because of this dichotomous incongruity that both anarchy and tyranny are able to flourish nearly simultaneously under postmodernism. Of this situation under postmodernism, Sire writes, “Ethics, like knowledge, is a linguistic construct. Social good is whatever society takes it to be (182).” Thus, under postmodernism, nothing is fixed and the truly dangerous subversive is the observer noticing such a situation and daring to point it out.

Here is an example of just how morally obtuse and bizarre things can become under the banner of postmodernism. To the postmodernist, few names are as esteemed as that of literary critic Michel Foucault. Foucault so embraced the notion that it is inappropriate to stifle self-expression and gratification that he struggled with the concept of whether or not society had the authority to categorize rape as a crime punishable by law (Sire, 183). Yet it is the very same postmodernist perspective, given form in part by the likes of Foucault, that claims to so identify with the oppressed that not only is rape seen as a man forcing himself on an unwilling woman but nearly all other forms of consensual heterosexual sex as well. Often postmodernists define what constitutes sexual harassment so broadly that it not only includes lewd comments and conduct but also the sincere complimenting of appearance and the inviting of someone on a male/female social interaction commonly referred to as a date. At the University of Maryland, one artistic genius created a poster titled "These Men Are Potential Rapists" and randomly listed the names of male students pulled from the student directory without even bothering to consult the criminal records of those publicly blacklisted in this manner.

In this chapter, a rough sketch has been provided highlighting the trajectory taken regarding prevailing worldviews throughout the major divisions of Western history. To some, such a chapter might seem out of place in a work with the primary focus examining the spiritual significance and impact of UFO's and extraterrestrials. However, understanding where mankind has come from is the first step in comprehending where it is that we as a planetary society might be headed. By cultivating a perspective that attempts to glimpse from the standpoint of the early twenty-first century both ends of the timeline, the idea that man as a whole will one day embrace extraterrestrials as a primary spiritual inspiration and source of truth does not seem as ludicrous as it once did.

Chapter 4
Calling Occupants Of Interplanetary Craft: How The World Is Being Prepared To Accept Contact From Beyond

In the first two chapters, the impression likely taken away by readers that have not given extended reflection to the more philosophical implications of UFO's and life perceived as being from beyond this planet is that this entire topic of speculation is not exactly the path one heads down if one's aspirations in life are widespread social acceptance and the moderate comforts of conformity. However, from the previous chapter's lengthy analysis, one comes away with an idea of how once-settled verities and assumptions have become so unhinged and up in the air that the very nature of reality itself is increasingly questioned and the disapproval directed more so at those insisting upon unchanging foundations.

It could be argued that the average resident of planet Earth is quite primed for subtle suasion by intelligences beyond humanity or by those claiming to speak on behalf of such entities. Granted, in the current sociological and cultural context of the early decades of the twenty-first century, most are not going to embrace the conformity epitomized by the Heaven's Gate cult resulting in bodily mutilation or death, hand over considerable percentages of their financial resources to move up the levels of the Church of Scientology, or even wallow in the free love excesses of the Raelian movement. However, belief in UFO's and extraterrestrials as a guiding force could be the very thing that the spiritually transient might end up latching onto to give themselves a sense of stability and fulfillment that many no longer seem able to find in traditional religion.

Vast swaths of the American population no longer live according to the faith of their forbearers and Biblical or theological literacy seems to be at all time lows. However, that does not mean most of these postmodern infidels have necessarily adopted the sterile and detached skeptical naturalism of the stereotypical scientist that insists all that we can know consists entirely of the material components of the physical world or the universe. It seems culture may be moving towards a paradigm where the boundaries distinguishing the spiritual and the scientific are not so set in stone as they once were as those claiming to speak on behalf of these epistemological methodologies unite around their shared opposition to orthodox Christian doctrine.

According to a December 11, 2008 Harris Poll, 36% believe UFO's are real and 44% believe in ghosts. A CBS poll, mentioned in the December 8, 2008 *Los Angeles Times*, came to similar conclusions with 40% of respondents admitting that they believe in alien abductions (Klinghoffer). The same column also points out this percentage is up from the 25% that believed in such phenomena during the 1980's. A number of pundits have also humorously mused that a greater number of today's youth believe that they will more likely see a UFO than to retire on full Social Security.

Perhaps in an earlier era or decade, such a statistic (if it was even collected) might even be considered as justification to condemn those responding in the affirmative or as renewed motivation to stamp out superstition on the part of establishmentarian clergy and physical scientist alike. But despite the faults of the present age and its tendency to at times enshrine its own biases as unassailable orthodoxy, in this period of transition between the paradigms around which cultures are organized, there is at

least on the part of some watching the philosophical upheaval taking place all around us a willingness to ask why certain people believe the way that they do and what in their background or makeup propels them in such a direction.

An MSNBC story titled “Superstitious beliefs getting more common: Instead of debunking beliefs, scientists look at what drives people to believe” highlighted the work of Baylor University professors Christopher Bader and Carson Menchen. In their work *Paranormal America: Ghost Encounters, UFO Sightings, Bigfoot Hunters & Other Curiosities In Culture & Religion*, these academics discovered that the reasons why people gravitate towards an interest or belief in what would be categorized as the paranormal (defined as phenomena not fully accepted by conventional religion or science) were as varied as the people that embraced these shadowy fringes of reality. Ranging in status from transients to brain surgeons, some are seeking alternative ways to understand the world while others are in search of that excitement that comes from a childlike sense of wonder. Interestingly, it was concluded that the moderately religious were the most likely to believe in the paranormal. Emily Sohn of MSNBC muses, "This could be because they are open enough to believe in the unknown, but not so rigid in their religious belief to reject mysterious experiences altogether."

Such claims tend to be borne out by other research as well. Earlier in this analysis, the Roswell incident was detailed as one of the narratives prominent in the circles of ufology. An article in a 2011 edition of *Skeptic Magazine* by Frank Borzellieri uses the incident as a focal point around which to gather research on the characteristics of those prone to believe beings from beyond this world were

involved. Of the 1066 surveyed, Borzellieri came to the following results. College graduates were less likely to believe in extraterrestrial involvement at Roswell. Interestingly, those with Master's degrees believed in Roswell at a rate of 19.8% while those with Ph.D.'s believed at the rate of 23.5%, and those with Bachelor's degrees believed at a rate of 25.9%.

However, that was not the most startling conclusion. That distinction would probably go to the finding that, the more religious one was, the more likely one would be to believe in the Roswell event as an event involving intelligent life other than human beings. Among those that thought of themselves as religious in terms of being neither atheist nor agnostic, the classification of those with the highest percentages of believing in Roswell as an incident of extraterrestrial contact were the spiritual with no specific religious identification (47.8%) and Roman Catholic (34.9%).

With the highest percentages of belief among those that identify themselves as spiritual but not religious, the discerning analyst is able to make a number of observations. In engaging those around them with the claims of the Gospel, both clergy and devout laymen alike realize that often those falling into the spiritual but not religious category are the increasing number who claim to dislike the absolutist doctrines perceived to be espoused by traditional religions. But often such individuals are unable to find comfort in the harsh realities of the existential loneliness of full blown atheism.

In *The End Of Time: Faith And Fear In The Shadow Of The Millennium,* Damian Thompson writes, "There were moments during the 1980's when it seemed that a major world religion was emerging (202)." This *Daily Telegraph*

correspondent is of course referring to the New Age movement. Roughly thirty years have elapsed since then. In light of our shortened attention spans, the "New Age" does not seem quite so new anymore. Some aspects from those days seem so silly now that they have become somewhat amusing or humorous punch lines characterizing that era such as a few of Shirley McClaine's more extravagant claims. However, despite a number of these concepts being set aside once the novelty wore off, others have rather been adopted by a sizable percentage in a manner similar to the way Christian symbols and modes of understanding have assisted millions in comprehending and coping with the world around them.

Initially, the UFO phenomena did not have significant New Age or apocalyptic undertones per say. As has been chronicled earlier in this analysis, in regards to the Roswell incident and the encounter described by Barney and Betty Hill, early accounts of the contemporary UFO phenomena tended to be of a clinical nature though overwhelmingly disruptive to the lives of those involved. However, as the number of claims of encounters (especially abductions) increased, it seemed people were no longer being taken upon the crafts of these beings solely for medical examinations and the extraction of genetic material. Rather, these visitors claiming to be from a place beyond this world were also giving those they had selected (a chosen or elect, if you will) a message to convey to the broader human community. One might say such individuals had bestowed upon them a mantle not all that dissimilar to that of an Old Testament prophet.

From the specific UFO religions and sects already profiled, one can see that the particulars of these belief systems can vary widely. But it would be helpful to

elaborate upon a generalized extraterrestrial spirituality that might be utilized to appeal to the broadest number of people possible or to get them to move collectively towards a set of predetermined goals and outcomes.

These beings often claim that advances in Earth's technology have brought the planet to the attention of vast interstellar civilizations. The development of the atomic bomb in particular is often mentioned as a cause of profound concern since with it comes the potential to wipe out all life on Earth. These beings claim that, at this point in man's history, it is now time for our species to take our place amongst this cosmic brotherhood before it is too late.

Yet a relationship with these beings is not without a price. For now it seems, these beings are for the most part content to convey a message to humanity through the select chosen. That message is that our species must alter its ecologically destructive ways for the sake of all life on the planet, which the aliens believe (in a fashion quite reminiscent of pantheism) is interconnected with no form being superior to any other. However, if mankind does not heed this message and “repent” (to borrow a word from Christian theology meaning to turn from one’s errant ways in a sorrowful fashion), widespread destruction not unlike the account of Noah’s Flood mentioned in the Book of Genesis will be visited upon the Earth. The Earth itself as an organism or entity will strike back to beat back the human infestation to sustainable levels as the world itself prepares for the cosmic golden age or the dawning of the Age of Aquarius as heralded by the rock opera anthem.

These visitors from beyond this world do not intend to stand by as detached observers throughout this process. The entities have insinuated that, for the sake of both the Earth and humanity’s continued evolutionary advance,

those mired in reactionary ways of thinking might even have to be removed entirely from this plane of existence altogether. Such a drastic tactic would allow the world time to heal and allow for more direct intervention in bringing such errant souls back in line with the harmony of the universe.

Despite positioning themselves as humanity's spiritual and technological superiors, some claiming to have had encounters with these beings from beyond this world claim that the aliens seem to be dependent upon and need human beings for at least one reason. That is nothing short of reproductive hybridization where genetic material is extracted from human beings and mixed with that of these alleged extraterrestrials in order to produce an offspring exhibiting characteristics of both species. Some taken aboard the craft utilized by these creatures claim to have seen children growing in vast test tube laboratories and tended in nurseries (Larson, 137-138). A number of women claiming to be the mothers of such children, irrespective of whether or not one believes that these children objectively exist, nevertheless endure profound psychological trauma bordering on grief similar to what one would experience at the loss of any other child.

Many will no doubt recoil in disbelief and even ridicule at the notion of human beings and extraterrestrials interbreeding as an outright impossibility due to the profound biological differences that would no doubt exist between species separated literally at least by light years and perhaps even as far as galaxies in distance. It has become a science fiction plot utilized so many times as to become almost cliché. However, this concept plays such a pivotal role in worldviews and belief systems where life beyond this world is foundational that it will be examined

further in the next chapter on a Christian understanding of just what the disciple of Christ might be dealing with in regards to this phenomena.

One might assume that a mission to save a species across vast stretches of the universe would be so complex and time consuming (especially if it seemed that the women of the species you were there to visit also seemed to catch your fancy as well) that there would be little time for what one might consider a secondary matter such as the religious beliefs of a species that could not be categorized as anything other than primitive when comparing the civilizations of the contactors and the contactees. However, not only are these beings out to save the environment and interbreed with fecund Earth women, but it seems an inordinate amount of their time is spent pontificating upon philosophy in general and the denigration of orthodox Christian theology in particular.

For example, one of the reasons mankind is viewed as such a threat to the planet has little to do with our proclivity to not clean up after ourselves or the desire to inflict grievous bodily harm upon others when we do not get our way either individually or as part of a larger group. Rather, it is because of the tendency of a percentage of the human species to dogmatically adhere to exclusivistic religious doctrine. The foremost among these, it is perceived, is of course the idea expounded in John 14:6 that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life and that no one gets to the Father but through Him.

Interestingly, as has already been touched on in previous chapters, assorted extraterrestrial belief systems have put forth a number of ideas as to whom they say that Jesus is and how He relates to the remainder of the cosmos. For starters, that ought to tell the discerning a couple of things.

Firstly, not all of those claiming to be alien missionaries to Earth can be correct and, for such a minuscule planet in a less than remarkable part of the universe, humanity has certainly seems to attract an inordinate amount of attention. If the average person is to believe that each of these movements is valid, it would seem there are apparently as many "denominations" among extraterrestrials and what they happen to be peddling as there is among human beings. In such a situation, it might be prudent for humanity to conclude that there must be something of an interstellar Cold War going on with the various factions not so much concerned with man's best interests at heart but rather with viewing our planet, and perhaps even our species itself for those with hyrbidization in mind, as a commodity to compete over.

A lack of a unified narrative among those that draw spiritual inspiration from life allegedly from beings beyond this world also prompts the discerning to wonder if these fantastical beings and the dramatic encounters with them might be more a projection of those making the claims than an objective reality. This is especially evident in regards to Christology. A number of these interpretations of just whom they say that Jesus is bear an interesting similarity to Mormonism. Mormonism holds that Jesus is not "THE" only Begotten Son of God, but rather merely "a" son of God no different than what the remainder of us are capable of achieving if we embrace the path of evolution and expanded consciousness as directed by these visitors from another planet.

For example, in the Urantia cult, Jesus is the incarnation of Michael of Nebadon who ascended through seven incarnations traversing the multiverse on the path to self-actualized godhood (Larson, 77-78). He appeared on our

own plane of existence so that He could teach us to realize the same potential within ourselves. At best, in such a system Jesus is merely one of the many avatars of the Christ Consciousness. Others to whom He would be the equal of and no better than would be figures such as Buddha and Krishna.

In *Religion In 2101 AD*, Hiley Ward describes this kind of concept as "Pluralistic Christianity". In this Christological understanding, not only would different interpretations of messiahship be applauded under the banner of diversity. Rather, His alleged manifestations under these other names and forms not recognized today as orthodox would also at some point in the future be gladly embraced by those claiming to be Christian.

Ward writes, "A future concept of divinity, and particularly the avatar or messiah expression, could well harmonize with the emphasis that man may indeed have many personalities...A plural concept of revealed deity is encouraged by the influence of the East with its...proliferation of many gurus and divinity types (175)." And though the true Christian cannot accept the notion of any messiah other than Jesus Christ, the question raised by the proponents of pluralistic Christ theology do highlight an important issue that must be addressed by the orthodox Christian in considering the possibility of embodied life not unlike our own elsewhere in the universe. However, it would probably be best to leave that question to the next chapter.

Yet another interpretation that would fit within the parameters of those deriving their spiritual meaning from beings beyond this world contends that, in terms of his origins, Jesus started out simply as a man no different than any other earthling. Because of the spiritual awareness and

insight possessed by this otherwise unremarkable carpenter from Nazareth resulting either from his own inherent intuitiveness or from pilgrimages to sit at the feet of Eastern ascended masters (a motif popular among a number of New Agers in order to amalgamate Oriental and Occidental spiritualities), extraterrestrials took an interest in Jesus as a foremost example of an evolved human being. Those aspects of Jesus' teachings that assorted leftists have gravitated to as a result of misinterpretations such as turning the other cheek or only casting stones if one is without sin may indeed be his own or taught to him by assorted mystics as he traveled about India or Tibet during his so-called "Lost Years" according to those adhering to such heterodoxy. Since these are undocumented, aspiring gurus feel that they can fill this period with any number of fanciful adventures. It is in regards to those events orthodox theologians would describe as "miraculous" that those drawing meaning from beings beyond the Earth believe that such entities can be inserted into the Biblical narrative. Foremost among Jesus' miracles that would receive such a treatment would no doubt be His Resurrection and Ascension.

Adherents of a gospel from beyond the stars provide an explanation that attempts to meld the spiritual contents of the Bible with an ultimate conception of reality that is at its core naturalistic despite whatever spin might be placed upon the scriptural account. Yes, this variety of ufologist will grant that Jesus did indeed die upon the cross. However, it is what transpired afterwards where advocates of this perspective part with orthodox believers.

One of the fundamental presuppositions of UFO spirituality is that those coming from beyond our world possess technology far beyond the comprehension of the

human race. Furthermore, since humans are a relatively young species (one might say "primitive" to put the matter a little more bluntly), to the practitioners of this superscience, our bodies would not be all that difficult to repair. And provided not too much cellular decay had set in, rejuvenating or revitalizing a human body in what most would perceive as the early moments or even days of death (as in the case of Jesus) would not be beyond the realm of possibility. This concept has even made its way into popular culture on the television program *Stargate: SG-1* where the extraterrestrial parasitic organisms known as the Goa'uld possessed technology that could seemingly resurrect the deceased from the dead and they often did so for the purposes of propagating religious deception.

Following the Resurrection, the most miraculous and significant event of Christ's final days during His first sojourn upon the Earth was none other than the Ascension when Jesus took leave of His cherished Disciples and returned to the heavenly realms. In Mark 1:19, the text reads, "After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven, and he sat at the right hand of God." Likewise, Luke 24:51 says similarly, "While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven."

Most Christians have depicted or visualized this event as Jesus rising bodily off the ground, steadily increasing in altitude until He could no longer be seen with the view obstructed by clouds or the result of having levitated beyond the field of vision of the naked eye. This is assumed, in part, because of a number of Biblical passages indicating that Christ will appear at the Second Advent in the sky descending downward back to the Earth. Matthew 24:30 says, "At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all of the nations of the earth will

mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory." His feet will set down on the Mount of Olives which will be cleft asunder during this climactic entrance onto the stage of terrestrial history according to Zechariah 14:4. Likewise, the believer is assured in I Thessalonians 4:16-17, "For the Lord himself will come down from heaven...and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever."

Those viewing the Scripture through more extraterrestrial lenses interpret passages such as these differently. The spin placed upon the texts in question are decidedly less supernatural. It is argued that what is seen here fits perfectly with how ancient man would have described a flying saucer ascending from the face of the earth upward eventually into the vast expanse beyond the clouds. Jesus may have stepped aboard such a vehicle, or He may have been levitated by a tractor beam from a craft hovering overhead. His disappearing or stepping into it in the sky might even be what the Gospel is attempting to convey in saying, "...was taken up into heaven" with the doorway being what the Israelite or Jewish mind would construe as the fabled Pearly Gates.

It must be emphasized that the key to unlocking and comprehending the seemingly esoteric and at times outright bizarre interpretations through which these extraterrestrial belief systems construe the Bible is the hostility these adherents have towards traditional Christian doctrine. For despite these alleged calls for interplanetary brotherhood, there seems to be little tolerance for those that keep to the Old Time Religion. To many, this talk about life beyond this world and deriving one's worldview from that idea or

its implications sounds like something straight out of the pages of science fiction. As in the case of L. Ron Hubbard in a previous chapter, it can be asserted that there can be a bit of a crossover between those that propagate these kinds of ideas as a form of entertainment and those that embrace these concepts as a catalyst through which to revolutionize the way the human species comprehends reality. Another such figure is Whitney Strieber.

Whitney Strieber is a science fiction author that has published novels such as *War Day*, *Critical Mass* and *Majestic*. However, Strieber insists his foray into the unexplained went beyond imaginative stories into something where he began to notice bizarre lights streaking across the sky. Eventually, ethereal uninvited visitors began entering his home in the middle of the night who would leave him panicked, anxious, and terrified as he worried what these beings might to do his family (Myers, 77).

Unable to initially recall the exact nature of either these visitors or details about them, Strieber underwent hypnosis like the Hills mentioned in a previous chapter. As a result, he was able to recall a significant amount of detail. Strieber eventually published an account of his interactions with these beings titled *Communion*.

The book was a sensation as Strieber heard from hundreds that his own experiences were startlingly similar to their own. As an author, Strieber no doubt knew a cash cow when he saw one. Given the bestselling status of *Communion*, Strieber did not stop with his account of unexplained beings violating the privacy of his home. This publication was followed by additional titles such as *Transformation: The Breakthrough* and *The Secret School: Preparation For Contact.*

In these, Strieber becomes more open about the faith he

places in his nocturnal intruders. Strieber conjectures that, despite their initial appearance literally terrifying him to the point of needing intervention and counseling, these entities seemed so full of angelic wisdom and were possibly even our creators (Myers, 78). According to Strieber, these guides have returned to our physical realm to recycle human souls through deeper levels of esoteric understanding to be found through the oldest of mankind's religions such as shamanism and the practices incorporated into Wicca.

It was on an episode of "The Oprah Winfrey Show" where, in a confrontation with cult researcher Bob Larson, that Strieber let out of the bag just how unwelcome traditional Christian theology would be in a new world religious order that would accept nearly every other belief system and philosophy. In a panel discussion that also included Laurie Cabot (the official witch of Salem, Massachusetts), Larson mentioned the Biblical condemnation of witchcraft (Larson 154-155). Winfrey and Strieber proceeded to gang up on Larson. Strieber particularly proceeded to point out how he had been enlightened by the practitioners of nature-based traditions such as witchcraft more so than the Catholic faith in which the author had been raised and still identified with to an extent despite its patriarchal shortcomings.

Strieber did not drop the issue at that point. He went on to call for a brand of Christianity emphasizing acceptance, gentleness, and "...not being closed minded and afraid about witches." The Scripture does call upon the Christian to share the faith with gentleness and respect in accordance with I Peter 3:15. However, though a case could be made that the passages no longer apply as literally in a so-called Dispensation of Grace, the law revealed by God in the Old

Testament to covenant Israel does explicitly warn against the spiritual danger presented by the practitioners of witchcraft.

It seems, though, that the gentleness and respect called for by the likes of Strieber may only be a one way street that the born again and orthodox Christian is expected to abide by. Interestingly, it does not apply to the very same devotees of tolerance and inclusion calling for it. For Larson claims that, as soon as Oprah cut to a commercial, both Strieber and Cabot let their true colors show not unlike that of a werewolf or a vampire letting their fangs out.

Cabot let loose how bigoted, right-wing fundamentalists burned witches like her at the stake and how that variety of Christianity was the real threat to America. Strieber chimed in by adding that it was Larson's "expletive deleted bigotry [that] is what's really evil. I know that witchcraft is good, and you have no right to say it is satanic (Larson, 156)." Larson noted that Strieber's rhetoric was emphasized by the fantasist's dilated eyes, protruding neck veins, and spasmodic twitching of his entire body.

Apparently, America's tradition of the First Amendment means very little to those that share in Strieber's perspective. For under the very same legal provision saying Congress shall make no law abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press (under which Strieber has made millions as a peddler initially of science fiction and ultimately dangerous spiritualist swill) Bob Larson also has the right to categorize the ideas put forth by Strieber any way this particular controversial cult researcher sees fit. Some might counter that one is reading too much into an intensely emotional exchange where one of the aggrieved parties snaps that one has no right to enunciate the utterance perceived as a slight or slander. However, the call

to abridge someone's freedom of expression does raise concerns when the one calling for such a course of action is at the forefront of an agenda advocating for the need and desirability to revolutionize and transform beyond current recognition nearly all philosophical foundations and social institutions.

As described in detail in the previous chapter, the world in which we reside is one in which the ailing and dying institutions around us were largely conceived within or were supported by a Judeo-Christian intellectual framework. As such, one cannot assume that the same foundational principles such as the worth of the individual and for that valued individual to speak his mind would hold a central place in the New World Order advocated by the New Age movement of which UFO spirituality is an influential component and constituency. In the majority of worldviews deriving from theism (especially orthodox interpretations of Christianity), each person is created as a distinctive individual reflecting in a finite manner many of the attributes of God. Such a thing cannot be said regarding this competing spirituality attempting to synthesize a number of the assumptions of ancient paganism with scientific terminology such as "consciousness", "quantum", and "holistic".

For example, in many streams feeding into the New Age movement, the individual as a distinct unit is not all that important. From the pantheist perspective, it is everything in its totality that is the basis of worth and value. In such analogies, the individual is compared to a single cell in a larger and more complex organism or consciousness. There can be an appeal in realizing that one belongs to something larger than oneself. However, it must be remembered that, in a diseased body, in the most dire of circumstances the

aberrant cell is often removed to improve the health of the comprehensive organism in question.

Civilizations do not pop up out of nowhere as completed expressions of human cultural and technological achievement. Rather, in most instances, they grow and develop through a process of steady progress where a few adherents initially gather around an idea or figure and multiply the number of disciples drawn to a message considered to be a compelling narrative. In turn, such revolutionary ways of perceiving the world are further distilled and extrapolated into additional works of imagination, rhetoric, and argumentation for the purposes of both reinforcing the convictions of confirmed believers as well as persuading the receptive and the curious into adopting an entirely new worldview.

Creation science apologist Ken Ham is noted for observing that one of the easiest ways to subvert someone's worldview structure to the point where they begin to accept the assumptions of evolution is by getting the target to doubt a literal interpretation of the creation account detailed in the early chapters of the Book of Genesis. Likewise, proponents of extraterrestrial spirituality have adopted this technique by putting their own out of this world spin on the origins of the human species. The astute reader might note that this point to an extent has already been covered in an earlier chapter, especially in regards to sects such as the Raelians that believe the human species is the product of genetic experimentation and manipulation by entities from beyond this world. However, in those particular contexts that message was propagated amongst a select membership specifically oriented towards a highly structured group. There has arisen a number purveying this variety of outlook that, though just as dedicated in terms of propagating their

message, have packaged this message in such a way to appeal to more of a mass audience that (though interested) might be adverse to membership in traditionally hierarchical groups and organizations.

This variety of extraterrestrial spirituality could be referred to as the Chariot of The Gods movement or theory. This school of thought takes its name from the first in a series of books published by Eric Von Daniken that also includes *In Search Of Ancient* Gods, *The Gold Of The Gods*, and *Gods From Outer Space*. In these texts, Von Daniken argues that eons ago mankind's ancient forbearers were visited by travelers from beyond the Earth that not only set into motion the wheels of technological progress but also partook of conjugal relations with the local primitives resulting in a more genetically rigorous hybrid race (North, 306). Because at that time and even up until more contemporary eras mankind was not capable of comprehending the advanced sciences and technologies necessary to travel across the cosmos, accounts regarding the arrival of beings bent on planetary intervention were couched in terms of mythology, legend, and even religion.

As in the case of other competing worldviews, the adherents of the assorted interpretations of extraterrestrial spirituality have attempted to provide their own explanation for the events described in the pages of the Christian Bible. As has been pointed out throughout this examination, the names given to the characters can vary considerably. Yet a good summary to this hermeneutical approach can be found in *Heirs Of The Gods: A Space Age Interpretation Of The Bible* by Lee Gladden and Vivianne Gladden. It is the contention of this professor of psychology and his wife holding a doctorate in theology that the Bible in particular contains clues that ultimately our world will take its place

as a member in an advanced interplanetary confederation and civilization.

Overseeing this process are beings that the Gladden's refer to as the Celestials. Fans of Marvel Comics might recall a race of alien beings with that name in stories by legendary artist of sequential pictorial narrative Jack Kirby. In these stories, the Celestials are the beings that advanced our prehistoric forebearers from that of merely an animalistic primate hominid to the status that our species now enjoys as reflective human beings capable of understanding something of the universe beyond our basic urges and instincts.

In *Heirs Of The Gods,* the Gladdens are deliberate in pointing out what they perceive to be two distinct stages of creation. The Gladdens insist that the distinction is to be found in the mention of the stand alone word "God" found in Genesis chapter one and the phrase "Lord God" in Genesis chapter two which goes into a more detailed account as to the first human couple Adam and Eve (73-74). It is the God of Genesis chapter one that, in the eyes of the Gladdens, is responsible for the creation of the general aspects of the cosmos such as the environment and the processes that gave rise to life. In their estimation, it is the second God that is responsible for man becoming a rational being capable of awareness and consciousness.

Unfortunately, at best, what the Gladdens advocate is a form of pantheism or panentheism. The couple writes, "To think, as the Jewish philosopher Spinoza did that the world of matter is the body of God is not irreverent, for it is, at the very least a figurative truth (82)." The Gladdens continue on to conclude, "The Bible says 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.' If we are right, this is the religious way of saying what the scientist means when he

says the universe has existed eternally and man has evolved through natural processes. Whether the ultimate power that produced the universe is called 'God' or 'nature' does not affect what is or the real relation we have to it (83)."

Thus, in the ultimate sense, often the spirituality of those that have embraced the variations of the chariots of the gods hypothesis differs little from run of the mill naturalism. It is more that those seeking comfort and meaning in such a belief find that, unlike the more hard-edged atheist, they still require some manner of higher order being to hold the hand of the species as we progress and evolve towards more advanced levels of awareness and technology. This would be the role played by these "secondary" gods, referred to by the Gladdens as the "Celestials", who set the early hominids they found on Earth down the path the human species finds itself on today.

Proponents of the chariots of the gods hypothesis insist that what the ancient prophets of the Judeo-Christian tradition and even the chroniclers of pagan myth and legend were actually detailing were not so much events that should be explained in terms of divine intervention but rather the application of sciences not yet understood by mankind at that particular time. As such, as was pointed out in the analysis of the Nation of Islam, one of this perspective's favorite portions of Scripture is none other than the cryptic Book of Ezekiel. In Ezekiel, the chronicler of this portion of the Old Testament describes a number of miraculous visions that he experienced. From the north, Ezekiel first saw an oncoming storm of an immense cloud. At the center, there appeared to be what looked like the fire of glowing metal. From this site also emanated flashing lightening and brilliant light.

As spectacular as this would be to behold, it seems such a

display simply marked the beginning of Ezekiel's encounter. For within the fire, the prophet saw four living creatures with each having four faces and four wings. Each of the four-faced creatures had the face of a man, the face of a lion, the face of an ox, and the face of an eagle. The text also points out that the legs of these creatures were straight and their feet were like those of a calf burnished with bronze.

Alongside the creatures, in verses 15-21 Ezekiel describes the famous wheel within a wheel which each of these beings possessed. From the passage, these very much sound like some manner of vehicular conveyance. For it says in verse 20, "Wherever the spirit would go they would go, and the wheels would rise along with them, because the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels." And in describing the wheels, verse eighteen elaborates, "Their rims were high and awesome and all four rims were full of eyes all around."

Advocates of assorted extraterrestrial gospels enthusiastically insist that the arcane symbolism elaborated upon in the text describes what is now the classic UFO almost perfectly. As noted in just the prior paragraph, the "eyes all around" could have been the craft's portholes. The wheel within the wheel sounds very much like what would now be known as a flying saucer. Often those encountering such vehicles often note the bright lights that regularly accompany such phenomena. The fire Ezekiel saw surrounding and apparently coming from the living creatures, the advocates of the extraterrestrial hypothesis as a hermeneutic through which to interpret this passage of Scripture insist, could very well be the exhaust of the rockets or whatever other energy technology was being used as source of propulsion.

Though the advocates of the extraterrestrial hypothesis might see what they want within this passage, it has been given other interpretations by the adherents of more traditional varieties of Biblical scholarship. The Biblical Christian will agree that what Ezekiel saw and what is conveyed to the reader is indeed nothing less than a glimpse into a reality beyond normal human perception and experience. But rather than a close encounter of the kind described by those that tend to use that particular scale, what Ezekiel experienced was an angelic representation of God's power and majesty.

Later on in the Book of Ezekiel, such as in chapter 10 verses 1-22, the reader learns that the four creatures are in fact cherubim. These are an order of angelic spirit beings first encountered in Genesis 3:24 after God drove Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden following the first couple's fall into sin. One of these sentries was placed there to protect the Tree of Life from falling into unregenerate and not yet glorified hands.

According to Bobby Brewer of the Christian Research Institute in the article “Seven Things You Should Know About UFO's”, the key to understanding the true meaning of this passage lies not in superimposing a twenty-first century imagination upon it. He advises, “First, we must read the passage within the entirety of its context. Second, we must attempt to interpret what the Biblical author was communicating to his intended audience.” Brewer goes on to point out that, while Ezekiel did indeed see what it was that he claimed to see, the reader would just as properly understand the encounter to be a representation of a metaphorical truth rather than one characterized by the solid physical reality of a piloted spacecraft.

From the text, it is pointed out that the creatures came

from the north. In Israelite history, often those great powers and empires bringing catastrophic upheaval and tumult hailed from the north. As such, since the vision has been noted for its other-wordly quality ever since its recording, this could be construed as a warning of God's judgment.

Ezekiel was already living as an exile carted off to Babylon. In chapter 3:4-11, God tells Ezekiel that Ezekiel is being sent to speak the words of the Lord to Israel, characterized as a hardened and rebellious house. Other references throughout the book speak of the scattering of Israel among the nations (Ezekiel 6:8). The valley of the dry bones in chapter 37 is believed to foretell of the reassembling of Israel as a nation in the Later Days.

Aspects of the four creatures and their wheels also provide descriptive representations of the attributes of God as well. With each of the creatures possessing four faces with each looking in one of the cardinal directions, the omniscience of God is conveyed in that nothing would escape the attention of these creatures or catch them by surprise. The fact that the wheels carrying the living creatures travel in a straight line wherever it is that they need to go at the speed of lightening testifies to the fact that God is everywhere and His supernatural messengers there at a moment's notice.

Given the fanciful excitability of the advocates of this spirituality from beyond the Earth to reinterpret much of metaphysics and religion through these presuppositions that the average twenty-first century American might not be fully accustomed to, the rudiments of this perspective are beginning to take a foothold in this society and are working their way up through many of the world's most powerful and venerable institutions. It could be argued that the popular culture in a number of respects has more direct

influence over the lives of individuals than many government agencies and even organized religion. After all, most church-going Americans are only in a house of worship an hour or two each week. During nearly every other waking hour, there is some kind of message presented to them through a variety of media attempting to either capture their attention in its entirety or by subtly slipping in ideas past the individual's perceptual defenses in the hopes that a seed might be planted that will later germinate into an altered awareness of some variety or another.

Starting with comic books and pulp magazines up through hit television series and summer Hollywood blockbusters, aliens from outer space have become a thematic tradition in these forms of entertainment. In part, such creatures serve as a literary device against which audiences can indulge the thrill of large scale battles and action sequences without having to grapple with the ethical implications of inflicting such violence on human beings. This is especially the case in narratives, particularly popular during the Cold War era, where the adversary was depicted as an amorphous monster or "other" from the mysterious and frightening "out there".

Other types of science fiction have used aliens as a disguise through which to explore the implications of the foibles and failings of human beings in a formant less likely to spark vehement outrage and hostility. Of that variety, *Star Trek* particularly comes to mind in consideration of the episodes in that program's assorted incarnations over the last half century that addressed racism, military conflict, and the ethical implications of genetic engineering or cybernetic enhancements. There was even an episode of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* that dealt with the issue of homosexuality from the standpoint of the challenges faced

by a member of an androgynous species that discovered she possessed an actual gender.

However, as this form of entertainment continues to expand its influence among a mainstream audience beyond the pocket protector demographic, the topic of beings from beyond the Earth has in a sense become one not so much about an adversary to be overcome with good old fashioned human gumption and ingenuity or as a sounding board against which to lean more about our own character flaws and shortcomings. Instead, the purpose has become more about promoting a more reverent and evangelistic tone among those of our species truly desiring to embrace the greatness within each one of us that these beings have so much to teach humanity if we want to advance to the next stage of development and avoid eventual annihilation. One of the foremost Hollywood luminaries bridging the gap between popular entertainment and the subject of extraterrestrials as a component of spirituality is none other than Stephen Spielberg.

Stephen Spielberg has approached the subject of extraterrestrials from nearly every angle imaginable. Some such as the TNT drama *Falling Skies* present a traditional alien invasion narrative where the extraterrestrials are depicted primarily as a malevolent other out to destroy the human way of life and are opposed by whatever guerrilla resistance those remaining alive are able to muster. Other films spanning the breadth of Spielberg's considerable body of work paint a more sympathetic portrait of visitors to our world.

One of Spielberg's most beloved films is none other than *E.T.* which is, of course, the abbreviation for extraterrestrial. In the film, E.T. gets left behind on Earth when he gets separated from the members of his crew while exploring a

forested area. E.T. is befriended by a human child named Elliott who gives the stranded wanderer shelter until the flying saucer can return for him.

Much of the human wonderment from the film no doubt stems from the little alien being concealed in a manner similar to the way a child might hide a dog or a cat that the child did not want their parents to find out about. However, Spielberg touches on a number of themes more spiritual or metaphysical in nature. For example, at one point in the film, E.T. seems to die and is apparently brought back to life as a result of the bond shared between himself and Elliott (Larson, 64). The scene brings to mind a number of literary allusions drawn from mythology and religion.

Firstly, if one interprets the scene as Elliott's love bringing E.T. back from the dead, the scene would be reminiscent of Christ resurrecting His good friend Lazarus. If E.T. through the power of the pantheistic cosmic consciousness that he seems to be in communion with brings about his own resurrection, it would seem that E.T. might be something of a messianic figure. Either way, the undiscerning viewer not fully aware of the philosophical assumptions undergirding the touching narrative unfolding before them might not be able to sufficiently be on watch as to how they are being subtly nudged into considering the notion that being brought back to life is not a miracle that only a loving, personal, and omnipotent God is capable of accomplishing but rather a task any intelligent creature is capable of mastering. All one must do is open one's heart to the astonishing wonder of the universe itself.

The Biblical parallels and allusions do not end there, prompting the discerning to grow further confident in their suspicion that there is indeed an agenda underlying this beloved cinematic classic. After phoning home, ET's

companions did return for the adorably disgusting tyke. As could be expected, this no doubt prompted bittersweet feelings in Elliot who, while joyed that ET would be able to return home, was also profoundly saddened that (given the distance between their respective planets and the prohibitively expensive telecommunications' rates of the 1980's) the two friends would likely never see or hear from one another ever again.

But as this interplanetary odd couple said their final verbalized goodbyes, ET points to Elliot's forehead and says, “I'll be right here.” Some might assume the alien is simply comforting the upset human child by reminding that Elliot will always possess memories of the special times that the two shared together. However, Bob Larson in *UFO's & The Alien Agenda* believes that what the extraterrestrial was actually doing was pointing to the mystical third eye occultists believe can be found near the center of the forehead through which extrasensory perception and telepathy flow (64). If one goes along with this interpretation of the scene, what ET is really telling Elliott is that the two will never be out of a prayer or meditation's reach of one another.

The student of the Bible can find in the Gospels a scene eerily reminiscent of this. In consoling His Disciples about His pending physical departure from this world, Jesus promised that He too would always be linked to those dearest to Him no matter the distance. In John 14, Jesus assured that, despite having to go away, another Comforter would come unto them. That comforter is none other than the Holy Spirit, the third person of the triune Godhead that empowers the believer to live the Christian life and to commune with God the Father and the Son in Heaven. And in a manner not unlike the way it can be interpreted that ET

promised to dwell in Elliot's mind, the Holy Spirit is that aspect of the Trinity that dwells within the heart of the saved believer.

Some might dismiss such comparisons as part of some deranged Christian witch or (perhaps more accurate in this case) alien hunt. However, Spielberg has had his hand in other influential blockbusters where his enthusiasm for the idea of life from beyond the Earth and the spiritual implications of such are even more difficult to deny. It is not simply that Spielberg is an astute businessman that has tapped into an insatiable appetite possessed by the American people. Rather, belief in extraterrestrial life is an intrinsic component of his worldview. Spielberg is on the record as saying the following: "I unequivocally think there is life in other solar systems in our galaxy. I've never seen a UFO, but...I'm really waiting my turn. I would love to see something that can't be explained by science or logic (Larson, 63)." It must be clarified that Spielberg actually must mean either something beyond science and logic at the levels presently comprehended by mankind or rather a mystical phenomena more akin to something spiritual or religious that must be accepted or experienced more as a matter of faith.

The film that should be considered a testament or manifesto to Spielberg's worldview regarding the possibility of life from beyond the Earth is "Close Encounters Of The Third Kind". "Close Encounters Of The Third Kind" focuses on a group of human beings, centered around the character Roy Neary played by Richard Dreyfus, psychically drawn to a remote location in anticipation of the arrival of a luminous flying saucer. Whereas many traditional science fiction programs and films (including a number of Spielberg's) depict extraterrestrials as a threat to

mankind, for the most part “Close Encounters Of The Third Kind” depicted first contact largely as a positive meeting and an exciting prospect. And as the film ended, a concluding narration intoned the words of Psalm 91:11: “He shall give His angels charge over you.” After all, what person in their right mind would question an angel claiming to be sent directly from above bringing new counsel or perhaps even additional revelation? To that, as they say, good friends, stay tuned.

“Close Encounters Of The Third Kind” will be remembered by cinematic history as one of the most imaginative films of the late twentieth century. However, the average viewer might not be aware of the real world connections inspiring the film. In the film, there is a character that is a French scientist named Claude Lacombe who argues on behalf of UFO's as a topic of legitimate scientific inquiry and investigation.

The character is a tribute to French astrophysicist Jacques Vallee. Vallee played a part in popularizing the system of UFO classification from which the film derives its title (Larson, 62). A close encounter of the first kind occurs when an individual sees a UFO within 500 feet. A close encounter of the second kind occurs when there is evidence that a UFO has manifested itself in a given vicinity such as scorched grass burned by rocket exhaust or some other form of intense heat energy such as plasma. A close encounter of the third kind occurs when the witness observes the extraterrestrial occupants outside of their respective vehicle. A close encounter of the fourth kind occurs when the suspected aliens abduct the terrestrial observer, often for the purposes of examination and experimentation as described in the case of Barney and Betty Hill.

In terms of his cinematic works, Spielberg was able to

reach the family oriented market through the sentimentality and (to some) even the hugability of a creature as repulsively adorable as ET with the fundamentals of the extraterrestrial gospel in a manner akin to a childhood story Bible. *Close Encounters Of The Third Kind* was more of an in depth seminar as to how contact between humans and extraterrestrials wishing to impart their knowledge and cosmic enlightenment might transpire. Continuing with this kind of analogy likening Spielberg's films regarding extraterrestrials to a corresponding form of Christian outreach, *Indiana Jones & The Kingdom Of The Crystal Skull* might be comparable to an evangelistic crusade (even though "crusade" might be more of a word that comes to mind in reference to the third installment of the series since the term was in the film's title). A span of nearly two decades separated the third film in the series (*Indiana Jones* & The Last Crusade) and the fourth film (*Indiana Jones & The Kingdom Of The Crystal Skull*). In that amount of time, the discerning viewer is able to detect the shift in emphasis as to what constitutes ultimate authority just out of reach to all with the exception of those diligently seeking to uncover the most profound of mysteries.

Though technically not explicitly Christian or Biblical films, *Raiders Of The Lost Ark* (the first Indiana Jones movie) and *Indiana Jones & The Last Crusade* at least drew inspiration from Christian symbolism and literary motifs as the backgrounds upon which these cinematic epics were set. In *Raiders Of The Lost Ark*, archaeologist Henry "Indiana" Jones, Jr. goes on a quest at the behest of U.S. intelligence service to prevent the Ark of the Covenant from falling into the hands of the Nazis. For despite the Ark being the epitome of the very Jewish culture that these villains have vowed to eradicate from the face of the Earth, Hitler's

background in the occult compelled the dictator to believe that the relic would assist him in global conquest. However, as in the case of so many others that attempted to misappropriate or misuse this holy object throughout history, the particular Nazis opening the Ark during the movie's climax met with an horrific demise at the hands of what the viewer is led to assume to be a company of avenging angels. Even as these spirit beings dispense divine wrath, Indiana warned the female lead as they were bound as the Nazis conducted the ritual to look away so as to not befall the judgment of those attempting to desecrate the Ark.

In the third film of the series, *Indiana Jones & The Last Crusade*, cinematographers Stephen Spielberg and George Lucas once again drew upon symbols found in the rich treasure trove of Christian legend and mythology. In this adventure, Indiana initially sets out to find his missing father who has disappeared while on a quest to find the Holy Grail (the legendary chalice used by Jesus at the Last Supper and which Joseph of Arimathea used to catch the falling blood of the crucified Christ). Once again, to stand in contrast to the goodness and nobility of the Grail, Dr. Jones faces off against the Nazis as the foremost expression of evil in the world at the time in which the movie is set. For the Nazis are interested in the eternal life reputed to be bestowed upon those that drink from the cup as well as, according to an eccentric millionaire that allies himself with the National Socialists, to write themselves into the Grail legend.

As the narrative moves towards its conclusion, a number of lessons are highlighted worthy of note. For example, judgment and condemnation are imposed upon those that would misuse the Grail and its power. Instead of being

granted everlasting or at least renewed life upon drinking from the false Grail selected based upon the chalice's external beauty (man looking on the outer appearance rather than upon the heart), the eccentric millionaire ages instantaneously before the eyes of the assembled and turns to dust. It turns out that the true Grail is as humble in its appearance as the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords when He utilized the goblet when Christ set the foundations for what would become the most solemn commemorative ritual practiced by His followers.

The viewer also learns that, despite how appealing it sounds as we move steadily onward to our own rendezvous with the Grim Reaper, unending life in this world still mired in sin would not be all that it is cracked up to be. For the Crusader guarding the Grail since the Middle Ages was so weakened that he could barely any longer hold aloft his sword as an act of defense. Sadder still was that for centuries the knight had been unable to leave the lonely chapel in which the Grail was housed as the relic's sustaining power (for whatever unexplained reason) did not function beyond those specific walls.

From the debut of *Indiana Jones & The Last Crusade* in the late 1980's and the premiere of *Indiana Jones & The Kingdom Of The Crystal Skull* in 2008, a number of things about life in America and the rest of the world had noticeably changed. To many, the threat posed by Communism (especially as epitomized by the Soviet Union) seemed to have receded into the pages of history like the Nazis featured in two previous installments of the series. Interestingly, Soviet operatives served as the primary antagonists Dr. Jones would confront in this latest adventure. Also, the masses now had at their casual fingertips hand-held communications devices such as

cellphones and Ipods more advanced than the computers used to navigate rockets and satellites in the heyday of NASA's space shuttle program.

Though set in the 1950's and centered around a quest focusing on a topic originating centuries and millenia ago as in the case of the previous installments of the franchise, *Indiana Jones & The Kingdom Of The Crystal Skull* drew upon inspiration more decidedly out of this world than its predecessors. The film revealed yet another layer as to the elements of the extraterrestrial gospel director Stephen Spielberg would hope to further cultivate as part of the public consciousness. A number of the elements pivotal to the plot were taken from what certain belief systems and perspectives would claim to be true to life.

For starters, during a riveting chase scene through a government warehouse that climaxes with Indiana riding out an atomic explosion in a refrigerator, it is revealed that he was brought in as a consultant in the attempt to decipher some mysterious wreckage that is insinuated to have been discovered in Roswell, New Mexico. One also gets the impression from the film that the warehouse where these mysterious artifacts are being stored (including the Ark of the Covenant featured in the first film of the series as evidenced by a passing shot flashed on the screen) is none other than Area 51. Area 51 holds a place as nearly as prominent in the annals of ufology as perhaps Antioch in early Christianity or the Oracle of Delphi in Greek mythology. For as a top secret military installation, Area 51 is where the government is believed to test experimental aircraft and aviation technology some of which, it is claimed, may be from beyond this world.

However, there would be more than a passing nod to key ideas in the field of ufology in this film. Central to the

quest of this Indiana Jones adventure (and hence its name) would be the so-called crystal skulls. As to whether or not these objects exist in the sense that they are the key to unlocking great power may not be as important as that there are individuals that believe that they are. It is believed that at some point in the future when man is in the hour of his greatest need when the skulls are brought together that they will unlock hidden occultic knowledge that will usher the world into a new golden age or at least provide the answers to the world's most vexing problems.

Those crystal skulls that have been uncovered or at least put forward as part of a hoax to deceive the unsuspecting do not appear to be appreciably different than an average human skull. However, the one playing a prominent role in the film through which intense psychic power such as precognition flowed looked markedly different than the average human skull. Rather than the characteristic round cap with which nearly every healthy member of the human family is blessed, the one depicted in the movie was instead conspicuously elongated, giving the relic a distinctively extraterrestrial appearance.

While the crystal skull in the story did turn out to be that of an extraterrestrial, this concept can be traced back to a factual archaeological reality that was meshed together with the narrative for the purposes of the story. In pre-Columbian Mesoamerica, it was not uncommon for the skull to be deformed into a distinct elongated shape. It is believed that this cosmetic alteration was accomplished by binding wooden boards to a child's head during the early stages of development before the plates of the skull were firmly set in place.

Usually this technique of cranial deformation was utilized as a ritual practice to establish social rank or status.

However, in some instances such as those documented at an archaeological site known as El Cementerio in the Mexican state of Sonora, it is not known why the indigenous of that area would have picked up the practice since they lived well beyond the boundaries of where it is more common to find remains mutilated in this fashion (Choi). Upon seeing such a shocking alteration to the human anatomy and learning it is not the result of illness, it is naturally asked why would it become such a mark of status to inflict such a trauma on one's child?

Advocates of assorted forms of the chariot of the gods hypothesis have suggested that imitation is nothing other than the sincerest form of flattery. It is argued that these indigenous cultures implemented this form of body modification out of a sense of reverence or adoration for the gods that had done so much for these people. It just so happened that these beings resembled what the contemporary mind perceives as the characteristic space alien with its elongated head. As such, these beings must have actually visited these ancient peoples to have had such a profound influence.

Ancient alien theologians posit additional evidence that the Indians of what would become Latin America were influenced by visitors of some kind from beyond this world. Foremost among this ranks the formations in Peru known as the Nazca Lines. The Nazca Lines consist of a series of stones placed along the ground drawing out gigantic pictographs such as a spider, a monkey, and a hummingbird. The amazing thing is that this ancient art went unnoticed from the time of the demise of the culture that had created it until the invention of flight since these depictions cannot be seen fully from the ground and can only fully be appreciated by an observer aloft in the air.

The imagination cannot help but then wonder why those that seem more primitive to our own technologically advanced standpoint would painstakingly lay upon the ground something that they themselves would never be able to see apart from the mind's eye of an impressively rigorous intellect. As with other landmarks of both the ancient world and times closer to our own in relation to history's more grandiose timescale crafted by the hand of man, religious belief and a desire to please those wielding temporal or cosmic power no doubt played a role as an overriding compulsive motivation. However, at least in regards to structures such as the pyramids and even something more Christian such as a cathedral, their magnificence can be beholden by any human eye in the line of sight even from a considerable distance.

Since the Nazca Lines are not, some conclude that such a monument must have been built to be gazed upon by beings other than earthbound human beings. Traditional academics, skeptics, and even uninterested laymen would likely conclude that these images thus serve as a testament of the faith of these ancient Indians to whatever spirits or gods that they did believe in if these primitive craftsmen would go to such lengths in creating a work of art that only these sky deities would even know was there. Advocates of the chariots of the gods theology would make the case that, to have been inspired to create a masterpiece that could have only been seen fully from above, these craftsmen would have likely needed tangible interaction with beings they perceived to be gods even if that interaction was limited to seeing them fly overhead in their spectacular spacecraft.

Intriguing as such speculation may be, *Indiana Jones & The Kingdom Of The Crystal Skull* delved even deeper as to

the origins of these beings certain theorists claim our ancient forbearers worshiped as the characters and personalities contemporary man now considers to be mythological. Towards the end of the film, the final skull was reunited with its compatriots deep within the jungle at a temple where it was obvious from the splendor that in its day emissaries from cultures far and wide came to pay homage and learn from these beings of formidable power and intellect. As prophesied, when the skulls were finally brought together (in this case reattached to the skeletal bodies of the alien beings they had been severed from), the profound truth began to be revealed.

In the plot of *Indiana Jones & The Kingdom Of The Crystal Skull*, that epiphany was ultimately the reactivation of the craft that had originally brought these beings to Earth. And as the temple that had been constructed in honor of and surrounding this craft was being destroyed and the saucer ascended into the air, in a final nod to the theories of Jacques Vallee, the vehicle did not whisk away to the stars in a blur. Instead, it simply disappeared as it commenced upon its journey back to from whence it came. Though that might be of little consequence to the unsuspecting viewer, in terms of ufology and that discipline's spiritual implications, that detail is of a significance that will be returned to in a following chapter that will attempt to provide an Evangelical Christian explanation as to what UFO's might actually be and how they fit into God's cosmic plan.

It would be irresponsible scholarship to suggest that the prevalence of UFO's and extraterrestrials in one facet of media as examined in the works of a singular director (even if that cinematographer was ranked among A&E's most influential people of the millennium) indicates a trend

worthy of consideration regarding how life beyond the Earth is being looked to as inspiration to or as a vehicle through which to transform how we as a culture and as individuals comprehend our place in relation to the material and spiritual aspects of reality. However, when these kinds of ideas begin to pop up among a number of the influential across a spectrum of social institutions, the concerned (especially those claiming to stand with Christ as Lord and Savior) should take the time to consider what is being said as well as the presuppositions undergirding these ideas gaining in popularity.

Apart from media entertainment as the voice through which nearly all people irrespective of social class are kept abreast of developments in a technologically saturated society, the most influential institution for the propagation of ideas and opinion is no doubt the educational system. Foremost, the secular public educational system, from the earliest years of elementary school up through the most advanced stages of university, is where the worldviews of those that produce the entertainment for mass consumption are largely shaped and molded. Education also has an added dimension that entertainment does not necessarily possess.

Entertainment, though philosophically and psychologically manipulative, can ultimately be viewed in large part as imaginary. The knowledge and information conveyed by education is set forth as being an authoritative and factual view of the world as it exists in its most concrete form. This is especially true in regards to those disciplines categorized as the “hard sciences”, with the less observationally rigorous subjects taught in academia such as the social sciences and humanities stepping forward to assist in interpreting this data and providing it with a framework of meaning.

Foremost of the epistemological methodologies preparing the educated for the acceptance of extraterrestrials would be those scholars specializing in acquiring and disseminating knowledge through the traditional sciences. Professor of Anthropology at the Niagara County Community College Phillip Haseley suggests that UFO's should be considered a legitimate subject of university study approached no differently than any other topic (Hough). Instead of approaching the subject as a matter of faith, those engaged in such research at the formalized professional level would use the techniques of radar, astronomy, and meteorology to evaluate the evidence and to support conclusions as to whether or not cataloged incidents could be explained in terms of phenomena terrestrial in origins or perhaps of an unconventional nature that require explanation from beyond this world.

Other academics take a somewhat less direct approach. Though just as vigorously dedicated to the proposition of the possibility of life beyond Earth, they do not necessarily dedicate themselves to investigating reported incidents of extraterrestrial contact. Instead, these scholars apply their expertise to formulating a plausible theoretical basis as to the possibility of life throughout the universe. It may come as surprise in light of the way many of those claiming to have encountered life from beyond the Earth are often dismissed with good reason for being of questionable sanity, but belief in life elsewhere in the universe is quite common in academia. In fact, it is a topic often and readily addressed by a number of scholastic superstars and luminaries.

In 2010, Professor of Physics at Arizona State University Paul Davies spoke on the topic of life that could be considered alien before a body no less prestigious and

august as the Royal Society in London. In his remarks, Davies suggested that, instead of looking to the stars for life different than our own, the search for such should begin here on Earth (Satter). Using the example of humanity switching from analog to digital technology which uses a weaker signal, the traditional approach of utilizing the large radio telescopes in the hopes that researchers might ease drop on the interplanetary equivalent of *The Tonight Show* or *American Idol* might prove futile.

Instead, it might be more profitable to first look in those extreme environments here on our own planet that would be considered too hostile for conventional organisms. For example, microbes have been found in places once thought uninhabitable such as volcanic vents deep beneath the ocean. By studying the complexities and idiosyncrasies of such lifeforms, scientists could be better prepared for an encounter with an entity or creature they would not have even previously thought to be alive such as one utilizing arsenic. Though poisonous to the majority of Earth's fauna, there are instances where the compound is used in unique biochemistries in a manner similar to the way our systems use phosphorous. Davies went on to suggest that there is no scientific evidence disproving the hypothesis that life here on Earth cannot be traced back to several points of origin, one of which might have even been from beyond this world.

It may strike many as a leap in logic to go from suggesting that life here on Earth can be traced back in an unbroken chain to a singular moment of creation as preferred by the orthodox theist or either to the Big Bang followed by the spontaneous quickening in the primordial ooze brought about by a fortuitous coupling of frisky amino acids as preferred by Darwinian secularists to instead contending that life sprouted up on any number of different

occasions. However, the idea that life may have been jump-started during multiple distinct incidents and especially as a result of a catalyst from the beyond the Earth is not all that novel. In scientific circles, it is an hypothesis sparking considerable enthusiasm among those considering themselves intellectually advanced and sophisticated.

For example, in the 1990's, NASA obtained a chunk of meteorite unearthed in the Antarctic. Additional analysis prompted scientists to conclude that the fragment was actually a piece of Mars that had been sent hurdling towards Earth after an asteroid collided with the Red Planet (Larson, 45). As startling as that idea happened to be in contemplating what would happen if a similar event were ever to strike Earth, excitement erupted for a variety of other reasons.

Discovered on the meteorite were microscopic carbonite globules similar to the molecules left behind by fossilized bacteria one one-thousandth of the diameter of a single human hair. Because of the minuscule size, further chemical and physical analysis to determine if the samples contained additional evidence of what scientists consider life were not conducted for fear of destroying such a curiosity and artifact of natural history. Thus, the enthusiasm over the possibility of life from beyond the Earth having been discovered and even possibly being the source of life here in these Martian rocks could be nothing more than a contemporary version of Percival Lowell and Giovanni Schiaparelli reading what they wanted to into early observations of the Martian landscape in the 1890's when concluding natural formations were actually deliberately constructed canals.

Such sobriety and experimental tentativeness did little to quell the enthusiasm of some of the same voices that would

no doubt shake their heads and sneer down their noses at Christians exuberantly making statements backed by little more than personal faith. For example, astronomer Carl Sagan exuded, "If the results are verified, it is the turning point in human history" and New Age physicist Fritjof Capra gushed "If confirmed, the finding shows that the cosmos is alive. This view should engender a different attitude toward the material world (Larson, 47)." This sort of perspective is quite pervasive among the prestigious scientific community. The quest to discover whether or not life exists beyond this world is not so much about the discovery of an additional mundane fact or to add a chapter in an obtusely technical textbook on astronomy or biology. Rather, the more central motivating purpose is often to subvert and undermine the credibility of a traditional Christian worldview.

The first Christian doctrine those claiming to be objectively searching for life beyond the Earth in a scientific manner undermine is none other than the notion of special creation itself. The first step in that process is to persuade that what is found here on Earth --- though rare --- is not all that unique in the universe. This formalized area of study is called astrobiology, combining the word "astro" meaning "stars" and "biology" being the study of life. Hence the study of life throughout the universe.

That very name itself was specifically selected so as to condition the practitioners and those pursuing this specialized branch of knowledge into accepting the assumption that we as a species and even our own world are not really anything to be all that impressed with. Previously, the same basic discipline began with the name "exo-biology", emphasizing the search for life beyond this world. However, the name was changed with the

realization that life here was not necessarily categorically different from life out there (Bortz, 5).

The fundamental operating principle of astrobiology is the Drake Equation. This mathematical assumption was formulated in 1960 by Cornell University Professor of Astronomy Frank Drake who was the first to search for extraterrestrial signals utilizing a radio telescope. This algebraic hypothesis was developed at the inaugural conference of SETI or the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence. This effort brought together a number of foremost minds to consider the possibility of how many advanced civilizations there might be scattered across the galaxy and how likely it might be to detect them. Specifically, the purpose of the Drake Equation was to determine the number of civilizations capable of communication. This calculation is determined by multiplying together a number of factors.

The first factor considered is how many stars in the galaxy are capable of supporting solar systems capable of sustaining life. Scientists estimate that there could be as many as one trillion stars in the Milky Way Galaxy alone. Even if only a small fraction of these are suitable for the development of life as we know it because of the vast majority being disqualified as a result of factors such as their nuclear instability or intensity of the radiation that they admit, that would still leave over a billion candidates in this pageant of cosmic proportions.

Another factor in the Drake Equation determines how many planets around these suitable stars would themselves be fit for life to arise upon. Such worlds would be placed in a so-called “Goldilocks Zone”. The reference is itself an allusion to the beloved fairytale where the protagonist constantly oscillates between the extremes of Papa Bear and

Mama Bear in preference of the just right moderation of Baby Bear. For example, in the case of our own solar system, if the Earth's moon was any closer, our planet would be subjected to weather too harsh for the establishment of intelligent life. If the Moon was any further away or did not exist at all, life would be impossible to sustain since the waters would stagnate for lack of sufficient tidal motion.

From the billions of stars in the galaxy that could theoretically sustain life are subtracted those with planets unable to do so. Even from those capable of sustaining life must be subtracted those that have not developed civilizations sophisticated enough to embark on the steps to seek out fellow intellects not all that dissimilar to their own. Despite these staggering obstacles that must be overcome statistically, proponents of the Drake Equation insist that the chances of what would be considered intelligent life elsewhere in the cosmos is still a near absolute certainty.

One of the first steps to unsettling man's perception of himself as something special in the epic of physical life in the universe is to propagate the assumption that he may not be the only embodied intelligence in all of time and space. Unsettling as that might be, the theist can emerge from that shaken but not really all that worse for wear by expanding his epistemological framework to include the realization that an infinitely powerful God could have commenced another work in a distant part of His incomprehensibly complex creation that may or may not intersect with what He has unfolding in our otherwise mundane spiral of the Milky Way. However, there is little chance of the faith of a believer in the more traditional religions (especially Christianity) emerging unscathed should the assumption be adopted that not only is there life elsewhere in the universe

but that life here on this world did not arise as a result of the direct actions of a powerful and loving God but rather was the result of causality that can be traced back to this life finding its origin on a planet or even a moon other than our own. The idea that "life here began out there", as the early episodes of the original *Battlestar Galactica* use to open, is known as panspermia. That idea can take at least two basic forms.

In what might be considered the simplest version, life arrived here on Earth in a manner similar to that Martian meteorite that caused a number of scientists to squeal like teen girls at a Beatles' concert in the 1960's. A great cataclysm such as an asteroid careening into a planet or possibly even a volcanic explosion of sufficient power could launch our cute little amino acids or even bacteria into space where they would ride the meteor until reaching their new homeworld. Upon finding the destination comparable to their place of origin, these simple compounds or organisms were able to commence upon that epic trek combining time plus matter plus chance commonly referred to as evolution that resulted in the development of sentiment organisms complex enough to gaze up in contemplation considering whether or not there were beings with rational faculties much like their own on the homeworld staring back at them across the looking glass of the celestial sphere.

Such an explanation might satisfy the heart so seething with an antipathy towards the Almighty bordering on the pathological. However, it needs to be dressed up a bit for those that, while not wanting to be burdened by the sense of guilt often inherent to orthodox theism, still feel a sense of dependence on an intelligence greater than themselves or those whose minds just cannot seem to accept the

mathematical improbability of life developing all on its own into all of the complexity all around us that we cannot help but take for granted. This could be considered the point where those embracing the esoterically mystical and the mechanistic approaches to ultimate reality begin to converge in this grand saga. For instead of life haphazardly gallivanting across the universe as a result of a fortuitous accident, this second explanation claiming that life on Earth originated elsewhere postulates that this world's breathtaking biodiversity was the result of intentional deliberation on the part of an advanced civilization with wisdom and technology staggering beyond comprehension.

This theory was presented in an episode of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* titled "The Chase". In the story, Captain Picard comes to the assistance of his old Archeology Professor who is on the verge of culminating his life's work which is believed to possess repercussions that could change life as it is understood throughout the galaxy. Learning of this, interstellar powers such as the Klingons, Romulans, and Cardassians not as dedicated to the peaceful exploration of space and the expansion of knowledge as the United Federation of Planets (of which Earth happens to be a key member) think that the professor has discovered an ancient artifact of immense power with strategic implications.

Upon arriving where the grand discovery is believed to be buried, a holographic message is activated that proceeds to explain that what those of the various assembled races are viewing is a representation of the first sentient species to arise in the galaxy. And, like themselves, this species advanced to the point of space exploration and hoped to make contact with other intelligent lifeforms across the cosmos. But unlike the representatives of the great

civilizations assembled to hear the message, this original species found no other beings with which to communicate.

Realizing that one day that their own civilization and species would come to an end, they seeded the galaxy with the genetic building blocks that would ultimately result in what (for lack of a better term) might be categorized as bipedal humanoids. Of course, this would also include the *Star Trek* variations on the theme such as the Klingons with the foreheads, the Vulcans with the pointed ears, and the Cardassians with the neck ridges. Those struggling to synthesize the insights of both traditional religion and speculative narrative imagination might remark what a beautifully New Age or postmodernist way to interpret the teaching from Genesis 1:26-27 about man being created in the image of God. No one will deny the role *Star Trek* played in expressing the late twentieth and early twenty-first century imagination. The most startling thing might be that the theme of this particular episode under consideration would be considered near "gospel truth" by some of the foremost minds of the scientific establishment.

The names of James Watson and Francis Crick will be honored in the annals of the history of science for decades and even centuries to come as the discoverers of DNA. By pulling back the shroud to the mysteries of the molecule upon which life and the physical aspects of individuality are built, these pioneering researchers laid the conceptual foundation launching revolutions in fields of science and technology as wide-ranging as medicine and criminal forensics. As such, neither will likely ever be considered intellectual slouches. Most likely, whatever they said throughout their accomplished careers no doubt carries considerable weight among the educated classes. Thus, if the likes of Marshall Applewhite of the Heaven's Gate sect

or Claude Vorhilon of the Raelian movement claim that humanity is the result of a process at least set into motion by beings from beyond the Earth if not outrightly designed by these beings, the remarks are taken with a grain of salt or summarily dismissed by the justifiably skeptical. However, if the likes of Francis Crick says something similar in the more hushed and reasoned tones of a respectable scientist, such speculation will win at least a hearing as the trend in which measured opinion may be headed.

Francis Crick is quite explicit as to his philosophical worldview regarding origins and ultimate reality. In *Reason In The Balance*, proponent of intelligent design Phillip Johnson points out that Francis Crick insists that the only conclusion possible in a materialist conception of the mind (meaning that our cognitive abilities and those aspects of our personality that make each of us unique are nothing more than an arrangement of the physiological nervous system) is that the chemicals produced by it and the electrical impulses coursing through it are all there is to what we think of as religion (65). This esteemed scientist is not even willing it seems to look to religion as a source of mythological meaning or narrative inspiration, instead dismissing religion as the superstitions of our ancestors.

Having reduced the sum total of the universe to nothing but its material components, Crick is left with having to account for in some manner the complexity we see all around us. Crick attempted to do so with the theory of directed panspermia. As in the case of other versions of panspermia such as in the account of the Martian rocks with the unique formations that drove a number of scientists just giddy, Crick's version of panspermia holds that life here began out there (to repeat once more the opening narration of the 1970's version of *Battlestar Galatica).* However, it

also differs in a very fundamental way.

Instead of accidentally resulting from what amounts to interplanetary billiards with one piece of space rock hurling into another which sent the rocks fortuitously containing the building blocks of life onwards towards our own, in directed panspermia these complex microscopic building blocks were deliberately cast upon the solar tides like a message in a bottle or targeted towards a specific destination by an advanced civilization. Unable to make this journey themselves, these extraterrestrial forebears would have likely based these bio-molecular codes largely upon their own. They might have done this for any number of reasons, with a prominent one being the preserving of the genetic heritage of an obviously doomed world.

The saga of directed panspermia does indeed make for quite a story as demonstrated by the episode of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* mentioned earlier. Proponents of the hypothesis have attempted to make a good faith effort to put forth evidence to support their argument. The emphasis, however, might be placed upon the word "faith" since what they do offer is more of an interpretation of the available data rather than anything factually irrefutable.

In *Darwin On Trial*, Phillip Johnson explains that the primary evidence put forward by the adherents of directed panspermia is that microorganisms appeared suddenly in the fossil record without a trace of their own genetic ancestors or evolutionary predecessors (108-109). This very same evidence would prompt the theistic proponent of Intelligent Design (for at this point such a distinction would need to be made as to what variety of Intelligent Design one is talking about since the acolyte of directed panspermia might also try to lay claim to the basic theory) to conclude that the sudden appearance of life at the most minute level

points in the direction of intervention on the part of a transcendent creator existing distinct from the physical universe. Johnson goes on to point out that directed panspermia is as every bit as much a profession of faith as belief in more traditional theories of creation, with scientific investigation into the origins of life as effectively closed off as if God reserved the subject solely for Himself to comprehend fully.

The fact that life, at least at the microscopic level, appeared in the geologic record with no remains evident of the prior steps leading up to the commencement of the biological era might serve as the foundational presupposition of directed panspermia argument. However, that does not mean adherents of this perspective are content to leave things at that. As in the case of their counterparts in the field of Intelligent Design and Creation Science, these theorists and ideologues also utilize that quickening moment to formulate complex systems of apologetic conjecture and speculation.

According to an article titled "Is An Alien Message Embedded In Our Genetic Code" posted at Discovery.com, researchers at the National University of Kazakhstan and the Fensenkov Astrophysical Institute suggest that proof of the genetic tampering of life on Earth in general and human beings in particular might be found in the form of a message attesting to this written into DNA itself (Villard). Such a "made by" stamp would first gain the attention of scientists by standing out as a characteristic or feature that could not be accounted for as part of the natural evolutionary process. As proof that just such a message might be tucked away among the amino acids and nucleotide sequences just waiting to be deciphered, these researchers from the former Soviet Union put forward the

observation that DNA already exhibits the precise orderliness of a language characteristic of deliberative logic. Since DNA is at its fundamental a medium through which information and instructions are conveyed, nothing would indeed better prove that our God is a God of humor than when scientists did get around to deciphering this message and there would be not other way to accurately translate the message into human language but as "Brought to you by the God of Abraham, Issac, and Jacob."

The idea of panspermia seems to be gaining increasing acceptance as a way to bridge the gap between the camps of science and religion. Interestingly though, it seems that those castigated as religious extremists and fundamentalists will not be the only ones holding out against this movement promising universal harmony and possibly even interplanetary brotherhood across both the species and the disciplines. Especially amusing is that a number of the most die hard of naturalists oppose the theory for reasons quite similar to the most dogmatic of theists.

In his Discovery.com article analyzing the speculations of researchers from the Soviet Union, Ray Villard asks, "And, even if the genetic code is ultimately considered the handprint of an extraterrestrial grand designer, then who designed the designer?" Thus by positing that humanity was not formed from the dust of the ground as detailed in Genesis 2:7 by God Himself but rather by what were jokingly referred to at one time as little green men, one has not eliminated the need to eventually confront the God question. One has merely moved it back one step by then having to ask who it was then that created these "subcreators". The atheist might be required to reluctantly agree with the theist that panspermia does not necessarily eliminate the role played by God in the great chain of

causality. However, panspermia shares at least the common cause with the militant atheist in undermining the perception of God as the intervening Father of all mankind by relegating Him at best to the status of an inattentive grandparent.

Particularly revealing are the fundamental biases of the naturalist worldview. The proponents of this mindset often promote themselves as the guardians of academic objectivity. However, such is clearly not the case. In the Discovery.com article reporting and to an extent even critical of the embedded genetic message theory, Ray Villard asserts, "Biological SETI inevitably smacks head on into the idea that is completely antithetical to science: the concept of intelligent design. The proposition of ID is that our biology is so complex it must have been engineered by a higher power."

It is not only biology but every facet of the material reality from the macroscopic level of the way in which galaxies rotate around the universe down to the microscopic level of the way electrons whiz around the nucleus of an atom that is so complex that there must have been an engineer transcendent to the physical totality. This conclusion has been held at least in part from the time of ancient Greeks such as Aristotle on up through Christendom thanks to the formulation of these ideas in more traditionally theistic terms by Thomas Aquinas in the form of the cosmological and teleological arguments. Despite this classic philosophical realization, there are those such as Ray Villard that insist in his derisive dismissal of the entire notion of Intelligent Design that that particular theory is antithetical to science.

Science is an experimental methodology that tests and examines components of the physical world in order to

learn about their properties and their relation to other aspects of the world or the universe. Legitimate science does not commence its journey with an a priori assumption of what it can and cannot know. Science worthy of the name as such accepts whatever data accumulates as a result of the investigation and extrapolates whatever conclusions derive from it within the parameters of "what" and "how".

Unless a scientist was able to construct a time machine not only capable of traveling backwards against the flow of the temporal currents but also able to leap over the chronometric boundary of moment zero when the universe came into existence, one does not have irrefutable proof as to what took place prior to get the whole show on the road. In such a situation, the scientist adhering to the rigors of the methodology must fall silent in terms of a definitive answer. At most, the only thing such scholars and researchers can offer are suggestions as to the direction in which certain inferences might be pointing and leaving those springboards for the speculations of theologians, philosophers, and related metaphysicians. If anything, given certain laws of physics such as thermodynamics that the amount of useful energy remaining in a closed system decreases over the course of a finite period of time, those claiming to adhere first and foremost to the scientific method would be required to admit that at least the Steady State Model of cosmology positing that the universe has always existed is experimentally beyond the scope of acceptability. Likewise, one would think that the complexity of even "primitive" single-celled organisms and "simple" chains of amino acids ought to be enough to awaken any but the most closed minded to the possibility of design and intervention on the part of a power transcendent to the cosmos around us.

Those still not convinced of the influence of the idea of life beyond this world and its spiritual implications might continue to dismiss the idea as a theory confined to a few academic eccentrics. After all, most Americans exposed to higher education can usually recall at least one professor over whom it was debatable whether the educator in question belonged in the faculty lounge or in a padded cell at the state institution for mental health. Such skeptics might be inclined to change their tune upon learning just how much public time and treasure in terms of taxpayer resources go into considering the so-called extraterrestrial question and how best to prepare the population should these visitors arrive on our planetary doorstep.

The two government agencies that one would expect to be the most interested in life beyond this world would of course be NASA and the military. As the National Aeronautic and Space Administration, NASA would be one of the primary lenses through which the United States as one of the world's foremost nation/states would bring into focus global policy regarding astrobiological life. It is understandable that the agency would objectively research the possibility of life beyond the Earth and what that might be like or in what kind of conditions such would be required to exist. As the branch of the government concerned with protecting the population and territory of the United States, it is within the jurisdiction of the military to consider potential threats from beyond this world and to take the steps necessary to maintain security should the planet ever experience a first contact scenario unfolding before the watching eyes of the world.

A number fascinated by the question of extraterrestrial life to the extent that the inquiry has influenced the formation of their existential worldview (such as in the case

of the sects profiled in this analysis) insist that any intelligent life form that would make a pilgrimage of such unfathomable distance would most likely do so out of a sense of altruism more so for the benefit of humanity then even of themselves. No less of a scientific celebrity than Stephen Hawking warns otherwise. Stephen Hawking, whose mind wanders the universe while his crippled body is confined to a wheelchair and who is forced to communicate through an electronic voice synthesizer, has come to the conclusion that, for an intelligent species to make such a staggering journey to Earth, the situation on their particular homeworld would have to be pretty desperate and grim (Peter). Thus, in all likelihood, these visitors would not be sailing the solar winds spreading a gospel of galactic love and harmony.

Using Earth's own history as an example, in Hawking's estimation the overwhelming majority of visitors would be arriving to exploit the planet's resources (possibly including human beings), stripping the Earth barren, and then moving on to the next world to pillage. Instead of the overwhelmingly positive encounter for the civilizations of the world as speculated by many enthusiastic about the prospects of an extraterrestrial encounter, Hawking believes it would be more akin to what happened when the American Indians and European explorers stumbled across each other's paths. Yes, there would be a few benefits that might accrue to Earthlings surviving the initial contact. However, the resultant genocide or catastrophe to follow would leave the human species devastated and our civilization in ruins. As such, Hawking suggests that mankind should do everything within its power to avoid contact with such intelligences altogether.

If the educated world is to take into consideration the

speculations of Stephen Hawking on this matter as they do his other insights regarding astronomical phenomena, a portion of the military and space research budgets directed to develop planetary defensive countermeasures might be money well spent to provide a degree of peace and security in regards to one of the most profound "What If's" to ever grip the human imagination. However, from the way in which resources are expended in the name of this issue in a day where it increasingly seems that America's ruination will result from fiscal irresponsibility rather than from an invasion of flying saucers such might prompt one to conclude that the question regarding life beyond the Earth might instead be a smokescreen for promoting a different agenda.

The division of the Pentagon charged with the mandate to think the unthinkable and to devise strategies or technologies to face such overwhelming challenges is the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (commonly referred to as "DARPA"). When the top rated minds of this agency and invited consultants convene to brainstorm over these civilization-obliterating calamities, the average person might conclude that the topics discussed would consist primarily of things like how to build a better laser gun, how to pilot a starfighter, or even lightsaber dueling techniques. However, at one such conference held in October 2011 in Orlando (perhaps an equally profound mystery of the universe being how these meetings just always happen to be held in prime vacation venues), the pressing issue needing to be addressed by the foremost minds of the military policy community was "Did Jesus Die For Klingons Too?" (Javers). Klingons were the highly aggressive warrior race of aliens from the *Star Trek* saga that particularly plagued Captain Kirk's crew through the course of the early series

and motion pictures as enemies. Viewers got to know the species in a more fully developed sense in the form of the character Lt. Commander Worf after he joined the crew of a succeeding version of the *Starship Enterprise* after a somewhat tenuous alliance was forged between the United Federation of Planets and the Klingon Empire.

One might dismiss the conference altogether as a cutesy (though somewhat costly) way for a group of nerds on the government payroll or deriving their livelihoods from the largess of such to meet a number of their childhood inspirations as both Nichelle Nichols (Lt. Uhura from the original series) and Levar Burton (Commander Geordi LaForge from *Star Trek: The Next Generation*) made appearances to greet the conferees. However, an initially silly topic was indeed addressed with the utmost seriousness. Interestingly, a significant portion of this scholarly reflection dwelt upon the shortcomings and insufficiencies of Christianity in regards to this topic rather than on the soteriological ontology of these hypothesized beings. From the tone, one would come to the conclusion that it was once again those pesky Christians holding back the advance of humanity and nearly everyone else across the universe from having a good time.

Interestingly enough, Professor of Philosophy Christian Weider from Ruhr University in Germany remarked that the focal events of the Christian faith --- namely the Incarnation, the Crucifixion, and the Resurrection --- taking place on Earth creates a number of problems in regards to the issue of sentient extraterrestrial life. Foremost among these would be that, if Jesus died on a particular planet, does that mean He died in that one particular instance for everyone on every planet? To be correct, to complete the classic children's song to the colors red, yellow, black, and

white, will there come at some point in both the history of space exploration and salvation the need to add tentacled, green, and scaly to that beloved chorus?

As fascinating to the implications of soteriology such conclusions might be, that issue will be explored a bit more fully in the next chapter that will attempt to provide an Evangelical understanding of what exactly the Christian is dealing with in reference to potential intelligent extraterrestrial life. But of particular note for this chapter is a response or two regarding this presentation postulating whether or not Klingons fit into the equation of salvation. In comments to ChristianPost.com in reference to speculations raised at the conference, Professor of Christian Ethics Tripp York snipped, "I think Christians need to first allow Biblical theology to influence how they treat the aliens that are here in our own midst." He continued, "...all of these prophets spend significant time teaching us the importance of taking care of the stranger...Since the majority of Christians in the U.S. struggle with this very simple and clear Biblical teaching, I doubt that they would have any idea of how to think about life on other planets (Schapiro)."

Notice how quickly the focus shifts to blaming Christians, especially American ones, for all that is wrong in the world. In comparison to other corners of the Earth and under other faith systems, the terrestrial aliens washing up on the shores of the United States have it pretty good in light of the respect called for in Scripture. For example, in Islamic lands such as Saudi Arabia, are foreigners sojourning in that desert kingdom allowed to openly establish explicitly recognizable Christian houses of worship and allowed access to all of that country's public accommodations? On the road to Mecca, there is a lane

dedicated to Muslims and another to non-Muslims. And making sure one is in the correct lane of traffic is the least of one's concerns when trying to remain compliant with Saudi Arabian religious law and social custom. For example, Bibles are subject to confiscation there and Christians are targets of abuse at the hands of religious police. Converts from Islam to Christianity face the possibility of capital punishment.

Muslim immigrants to and converts within the United States face nowhere near that level of intimidation and persecution. Granted, Muslims might not always be greeted with the warmest of open arms. And in incidents of mistreatment, usually it is discovered that the perpetrators are not adherents of traditional forms of Christianity and these criminal acts often receive considerable media scrutiny for violating America's social contact (derived in good measure from the Biblical assumption of all people being made in the image of God). For the most post, Muslims in America are able to practice their faith in public and to disseminate those beliefs as they see fit.

It is also worthy of note how anti-Americanism is incorporated into the narrative of how the intolerance of Christianity prevents adherents of that faith from being broadminded enough to embrace intelligent life from other worlds. For are other nations really more open to immigrants and foreigners than America itself? For example, in making the case as to why American Christians should embrace a lenient and expansive immigration policy, a number of Evangelical leaders have highlighted and celebrated the religious tendencies of Latin American people.

One of the largest populations identifying with that particular demographic and ethnic categorization originate

from Mexico. Media attention focused on immigration emphasizes the hardship of Mexicans (either legal or illegal) coming to live in the United States. But these individuals have it on easy street compared to Hispanics from other countries sneaking into Mexico or attempting to settle there in compliance with Mexican law. For example, those doing so illegally are often subjected to abuse even of a sexual nature and that also on the part of Mexican law enforcement. And even if one moves to Mexico legally, one would be forced to endure a second class status voices in the American media would call for UN intervention over and the establishment of human rights tribunals if carried out as part of U.S. immigration policy. For example, naturalized Mexican citizens cannot run for elected office in their adopted homeland, cannot hold a number of positions in that nation's civil service, and must agree to limit the extent of their political activism.

Some might consider that sidebar as possessing little bearing for a topic at hand that goes far beyond the border squabblings of a single planet. However, it was elaborated upon to make the point that little evidence exists that Americans do not at least make a goodhearted Yankee effort to live up to the principle of at least striving to treat the foreigner among us with a modicum of fairness and respect. It also highlights the point that, at these upper echelons of the bureaucratic policy making process, extraterrestrial life is often not approached from the standpoint of an objective scientific subject but rather as a catalyst to remake both man and society along the lines of another worldview.

Concerns and speculations regarding contact with life from beyond this world, since it would involve more than one nation and even include countries beyond the proverbial Great Powers in this day of instantaneous communication,

have resulted in a call for a more planetary approach. Thus, a first contact scenario could be the event that would trigger the acceptance and implementation of a singular worldwide governing authority. According to a January 30, 2011 *Guardian* article titled "Earth must prepare for close encounter with aliens", the *Philosophical Transactions Of The Royal Society* suggests that the United Nations would logically be the institution through which diplomatic relations with these visitors should be coordinated (Jha). This world body's Committee On The Peaceful Uses Of Outer Space would be particularly qualified for this complex and unprecedented undertaking. At one point, there was even deliberation about selecting a singular United Nation's functionary to specialize in the area of interplanetary diplomacy who would in affect serve as Earth's ambassador to whomever or whatever came knocking on Earth's doorstep.

Granted, given the complexities of Earth's own cultures, it is understandable that humanity would want to put its best foot forward for what would no doubt be one of the most important first impressions ever made. One might not necessarily know without deliberation and contemplation what might set off an incident with possibly disastrous consequences. On a humorous note, on the homeworld of the character ALF, cats were viewed not as pets but rather as a food source. More seriously, as part of the back story of the television drama *Babylon 5,* an incident occurred where Earthlings interpreted as an act of aggression a gesture of respect on the part of an alien race that led to an exchange of weapons fire that killed the extraterrestrial leader and instigated a war that would have resulted in humanity's destruction had the aliens not eventually discovered that their messianic figure was in fact a time

traveling human.

However, as in the case of the Pentagon symposium considering the soteriological nature of Klingons, the discerning cannot help but notice the inordinate amount of discussion that transpires in the circles seriously grappling with these issues that goes into emphasizing how religion in general and Christianity in particular holds back the human race and how this prominent social institution either needs to be significantly altered or perhaps even abandoned altogether. One conference addressing this topic was cosponsored by the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the John Templeton Foundation, and NASA. The conclusions of these speculations were published in a report titled "Philosophical, Ethical, and Theological Implications of Astrobiology (Kaufman)."

The John Templeton Foundation and the American Association for the Advancement of Science are private organizations. As such, they should be free to propagate whatever ideas and perspectives that they please, though Christians should keep a cautious eye on the lookout since the John Templeton Foundation especially was founded to advance a particular agenda in regards to the subject of public religion. However, when an official from a government agency such as NASA makes a pronouncement on these kinds of issues, the statement is being made on the public dime. Taxpaying Christians are within their rights to examine the presuppositions underlying such proclamations and to expose via whatever small platform that the believer has been given these conceptual errors and dangers that have been uncovered.

Stephen J. Dick, NASA's chief historian at the time, was quoted in a July 20, 2008 *Washington Post* story covering the symposium as saying how the Abrahamic faiths would

be required to adapt to the discovery of extraterrestrial life because in these traditions, "...the relationship of God and man is so central, and the idea that man was made in God's image and put on Earth is so strong (Kaufman)." He did not simply suggest that the faithful would merely need to expand their understanding of the ability of God to hold all of His vast creation together as taught in Colossians 1:17. Instead, the bureaucrat went on to conclude, "A God that created the Earth and life on other Earths would still be majestic, but the logic of Him being someone to pray to and get salvation from diminishes." Such a sentiment suggests that life on this planet would not be a priority to such a creator. Instead of being akin to a tenured professor able to devote Himself to a single university, God would be more like an itinerant adjunct horribly split between multiple campuses.

Stephen Dick is no doubt provided a respectable government salary and an impressive title that ought to help him in picking up bookish chicks at cocktail parties. As such, he ought to be able to tell inquirers just about anything conceivable regarding NASA's past or at least be able to point the curious in the right direction to get the question answered. Nowhere in that job description as chief historian does it say anything about an ability to prophesy infallibly about the days of the aeronautical agency yet to come. In that regard, his opinion should not carry much more weight than anyone else's pondering such esoteric matters.

Those sympathetic to the pronouncement by this elite NASA functionary might respond that these intellectuals in the federal employ should be allowed to let their minds wander in whatever direction they may. Doing so expands the boundaries of knowledge and pushes back the frontiers

of ignorance. The results of doing so consist of the kind of innovation that brought the country and ultimately the world wonders such as Tang and the Internet.

Yet in reality, such unfettered speculation might be more about hostility towards orthodox and classical theism at the highest echelons of America's space administration than about promoting an atmosphere where participants can flourish in the free exchange and dissemination of ideas without fear of the consequences. According to the Discovery Institute, a scientist at the agency's Jet Propulsion Laboratory was punished for holding to a theistic interpretation of Intelligent Design. One must note the deliberate phrasing “theistic interpretation of intelligent design”. For if the scientist had speculated that human beings were the result of biological intelligences from beyond this world, he would have probably been embraced as the kind of expansive free thinker that the Jet Propulsion Laboratory celebrates in its public statements and notifications.

Those considering the role played by the bureaucratic space exploration and policy community eventually come to realize that the agencies do not limit themselves to objective verifiable science. Often such social engineers are not above propagating their own respective faith-based presuppositions in the attempt to manipulate the public into embracing or implementing a predetermined outcome. For example, a study jointly issued by NASA's Planetary Science Division and Penn State University titled “Would Contact With Extraterrestrials Benefit Or Harm Humanity” examined how a number of scenarios might play themselves out (Baum).

One in particular hinted at a pending judgment worthy of an old-fashioned Old Testament God. The thing was that

the scenario had little to do with mankind's proclivities towards the classic vices such as fornication and drunkenness. Rather, extraterrestrials might attack the Earth to either obliterate or subjugate humanity to prevent global warming or other related forms of environmental degradation from spreading beyond this planet like a plague. Such a scenario sounds quite similar to the plot of the remake of "The Day The Earth Stood Still". In the original, Klaatu comes to Earth on a mission to convince the nations of the world (under threat of overwhelming punishment) to give up nuclear weapons in order to prevent such conflict from spreading across the galaxy. Modifying the storyline to address the concerns of the moment, in the new version Keanu Reeves heralds a similar "gospel". But this time he is accompanied by a nanotech swarm capable of molecularly deconstructing anything standing in the path of this message which is not so much focused against the evils of nuclear weapons but rather in support of the imperative of environmental preservation.

Experts in space policy circles also believe that man must not only divest himself of his traditional religious underpinnings for the purposes of repairing his broken planet. Man must also move beyond traditional conceptions of God if we are to advance beyond the cradle of our infancy here on Earth and out into our maturity amongst the stars. Former European Space Administration senior manager Guilio Prisco in an article titled "Cosmic Religions For Space Colonization", posted on the website of the Institute For Ethics and Emerging Technologies, suggested adopting a number of the philosophical outlooks initially developed by the Soviet or Russian space program as an approach to these kinds of challenges. Known as Cosmism, this worldview drawing in part from the brands of Russian

Orthodox Christianity inclined towards mystical experience suggests that, instead of abandoning the concept of God altogether as advocated by the most militant strands of atheistic Communism, humans ourselves should embark on the quest towards a sort of godhood. The founders of the Russian space program Konstantin Tsiolkvsky and Nikolai Fedorov believed that one of the chief goals of science was to achieve some form of immortality where we ourselves resurrect the dead. One of the imperatives propelling humanity out into the vacuum of space would be to find breathing room for all of those people no longer passing out of existence.

To most, the idea of resurrection is influenced by connotations of a necrotic body being reanimated or, in the traditional Christian understanding, being rejuvenated back into an incorruptible everlasting glorified state of corporeal perfection. However, the evangelists of Cosmism tinker with that definition to accomplish what under normal circumstances would only be possible by a miracle on the part of God. Instead, advanced science and technology would be relied upon. To pull off the feat of technoshamanism defined as "resurrection" by the Comsmists will not be as seemingly impossible as the human mind/brain grows increasingly interconnected and interdependent upon computers integrated into our own physiology. All of a person's emails, social media updates, and search engine inquiries could be collected over the course of an individual's existence and compiled through a bio-software interface known as a mindfile. This would essentially serve as a backup copy of the sum total of a person's experiences that could be stored externally.

Rather than mustering the resources necessary to transport biological humans across outer space, Guilio

Prisco suggests instead one day uploading these mindfiles onto miniaturized spacecraft that would be launched into the cosmos. As well as exploring strange new worlds and searching out new civilizations, part of the mission would be to bump into what would be considered God along the way. But in the same manner in which the concept of resurrection has been modified to such an extent that no adherent of traditional theology would recognize it in the form proposed, the Cosmists have desupernaturalized God as well.

This aspiration is similar to the chariot of the gods hypothesis. But in this instance, instead of already having met the extraterrestrials in the distant past, mankind will rather encounter these intelligences at some point in the far future. Those gravitating towards the Cosmist outlook often believe that there exists somewhere in the vast reaches of the universe extraterrestrials that, from the standpoint of where humanity finds itself at the moment positioned along the scale of biological and technological development, would appear to be gods. Prisco writes, "I am persuaded that 'future magic' technologies will permit achieving, by scientific means, most of the promises of religion --- and many amazing things that no human religion dreamed. If there are god-like beings in the universe, I think we should go and meet them out there and try to become God-like beings ourselves."

Such a perspective is not as rare among the rockstars of celebrity science as those of us in the mundane workaday world might suspect. Prisco references as support for his own conjectures Richard Dawkins who, in *The God Delusion*, speculated about civilizations so advanced as to be godlike in ways that a theologian could not possibly conceive. Yet this is the very same Richard Dawkins so

fanatic about the fact-driven faith-free life of science that he has suggested that it is nearly an act of child abuse for parents to indoctrinate or raise their offspring in the family's respective religious tradition. It must be pointed out that, since no definitive proof or evidence has been discovered of these god-like non-gods, any statements postulated about such entities are even more a matter of faith than those promulgated by a Biblical theologian. For at least the theologian is endeavoring to draw his conclusions from a source purported to recount actual events rather than the extravagant imaginations of a few scientists merely spouting off (perhaps even half-intoxicated) the tops of their heads.

Prisco suggests that these godlike aliens upon encountering these disembodied human intelligences could redownload them into newly engineered bodies. It might be that the human preference for an organic body is merely an infantile proclivity or bias with most of the life in the universe, in Prisco's estimation, having evolved beyond the biological level. Either way, it is those preferring this computerized spirituality over the old time religion of Christianity that still must look to fanciful explanations in the attempt to comfort the soul or at least the firing neurons from the terror upon realizing that our lives in their current transient state are fleeting like a vapor in the scope of cosmic time.

If asked if they think that belief in extraterrestrials could become a prominent form of spirituality or at least exert considerable influence over that aspect of existence from which man draws his most fundamental inspiration, most would look at the one making such an inquiry with an expression not all that different than if they had actually seen a flying saucer dart across the sky. Such a drastic shift

in humanity's perception as to what is acceptable and normal in regards to this question will not change overnight or maybe even for some time to come. However, it is the contention of this chapter that there are influential elites at work in strategic places throughout global society nudging the unsuspecting into altering their fundamental worldview into accepting that these objects exist as a phenomena directed by a recognizable intelligence also capable of assisting mankind in resolving individual and collective problems of a profound magnitude.

As elaborated, a number of influential social institutions are being utilized to carry out this function. The most influential is no doubt the media. Stories about spaceships and aliens not only spark the imagination. These narratives at times are added like salt to agitate a thirst for something beyond our eyes in a world that has already expended considerable resources in the attempt to push a traditional understanding of God beyond the periphery of awareness. Probably one of the most surprising things about doing so is not so much that those pushing such an agenda believe extraterrestrials are a pragmatic literary motif through which to make observations about the human condition that viewers or readers would otherwise be guarded against. Rather, it is that the highly creative often believe that the presentation of these beings is an end in itself in order to condition the population to one day embrace first contact with a decreased likelihood of mass psychological breakdown.

The entertainment industry would not alone be able to sufficiently prepare humanity for the arrival of these visitors that would forever alter the future of this planet. Other social institutions with their own considerable influence are also contributing to the gradual acceptance of the idea of

intelligent life from beyond this world. A number of astronomers from the world of academia have moved the parameters of the debate and issue from one of condescension and ridicule associated with the term "UFO" by expressing their research in the vocabulary of astrobiology or exobiology. It is from this intermingling of the hard sciences such as physics and biology with those disciplines categorized as the soft or social sciences such as sociology and psychology that bureaucrats and elected officials craft policies that will nudge the population to a footing that would be capable of accepting extraterrestrial life should a first contact encounter ever take place.

Thus far, this analysis has examined how the belief in life beyond this world impacts the worldviews of those embracing the concept from a variety of perspectives and circumstances. A summary of these changes in the prevailing cultural consensus over the decades and even the centuries has been provided as an attempt to explain why the world now finds itself upon a precipice where looking to these non-human intelligences may eventually go from being a sign of alienation or instability to becoming a conventional norm.

Up to this point, this analysis has attempted to refrain from making a declaration as to what this phenomena might actually be and whether it objectively exists. Rather, the topic has been approached as to how it impacts belief and worldview. However, in order for the Christian to address this challenge from the strongest possible position irrespective of the type of ministry in which the believer might find himself, the Christian will need to be equipped with information as to what one might be dealing with long before a shimmering saucer lands in the front yard or a lanky green tentacle rings the door bell asking to be taken to

your leader. Thus, in the following chapter, theories of just what individuals are experiencing or encountering when they believe they are interacting with life from beyond this world and just where this phenomena fits within orthodox Evangelical theology will be elaborated.

Chapter 5:
Can Flying Saucers Exist In A Theistic Universe?

With the rise of online gaming and roleplaying, it has become quite clear that elaborate scenarios and alternative realities can be constructed in the imagination that can be projected onto a computer screen or even played out only in the theater of the mind into which the individual can immerse himself but which bear little connection to what the rationally balanced would broadly agree upon as the real world. In determining the soundness and validity of a worldview, scholars such as theologians, philosophers, and even occasionally socio-cultural critics turn to a variety of tests. Foremost among these rank coherence and correspondence.

In the test of coherence, the philosophical investigator attempts to determine how well the propositions or assumptions of a given system stick or meld together as the attempt is made to construct a comprehensive vision of reality. For example, one can barely find a classroom across a secular university campus where it is not constantly propounded that there are no absolutes or moral values superior to any other. Along with that, advocates of this relativism then insist that certain minorities that were perhaps systematically disenfranchised at some point in the past should not only be protected but also now catered to to the point of placing such demographic categorizations in a place of superiority to those perceived to be of a majoritarian origin. However, these two concepts do not necessarily cohere together for the purposes of rational livability. For example, if no moral or cultural perspective is superior to any other, on what grounds does one oppose a Nazi or racialist Skinhead that not only wants to establish

institutions based upon their own supremacist outlook but even wants to exterminate certain individuals as transpired in the Germany of the 1940's? In a situation where presuppositions do not cohere, the only way to force contradictory notions together is through some form of arbitrariness that results in some manner of injury being inflicted upon the involved parties and a conceptual confusion that spreads to infect the particular social environment under consideration.

The second test to determine the validity of a worldview is correspondence. The purpose of the test of correspondence is to determine how thoroughly a worldview addresses reality as it actually exists largely for the purposes of equipping the adherents of the system to successfully navigate the challenges of life and the broader universe. A worldview can have an internal consistency or coherence without necessarily referencing a subject external to these ideas under consideration. Foremost among these would include certain branches of mathematics. Another example of coherence with no relation to the external world might also include those realms of fantasy and role play previously mentioned.

A case might be made that few greater questions exist than whether or not intelligent life beyond the human exists transcendent to the realm of the imagination where much of the speculation regarding this topic has transpired and where the vast majority feel the most comfortable in approaching this issue. Thus, the purpose of this particular chapter will be to attempt to provide an explanation for what individuals are dealing with when they believe they have encountered intelligent life beyond the human and the implication of that upon the Christian worldview if this phenomena possesses an objective existence beyond

imagination.

As of this writing, when the average American that does not expend measurable time in contemplation regarding extraterrestrial life hears of an individual claiming to have encountered such, they are inclined to believe that at worst the individual is promulgating accounts of a fraudulent nature for the purposes of self-aggrandizement or at best suffers from an overactive imagination. Thus, the Christian wanting to get at the truth that is out there (to paraphrase a tagline from *The X-Files*) must first consider the argument that intelligent life beyond this world does not exist or at least has not yet been objectively encountered at this point in history.

It could be argued that there seems to be an increase in these encounters because individuals are constantly bombarded by these concepts and images disseminated throughout contemporary culture. It is not necessarily that these individuals want to get caught up in an encounter perceived to be out of this world or make up the details out of a desperate attempt for attention. However, whether or not this cognitive outcome is the goal of those saturating society with these kinds of ideas is certainly open to debate as witnessed in previous chapters.

An article published in a 2011 issue of *Skeptic Magazine* titled "Pulp Fiction UFO's: How The Origin Of UFO's Developed From The Extraterrestrial Spacecraft Depicted In Pulp Magazines" attempts to provide a rationalistic explanation for the increasing number of eyewitness accounts regarding this phenomena. The article does so by appealing to a concept from psychology known as a mental set. The idea is closely related to that of the notion of presuppositions formulated by a number of Reformed apologists and theologians. The *Skeptic Magazine* article

defines mental set as “an instantaneous mental process whereby a neutral stimulus is interpreted according to previously relevant information available to the observer (Armando, 18).” For example, in today's environment with numerous images of outer space adventures depicted throughout popular media, the mind could easily interpret unrecognized sensory data as some kind of spacecraft (often of the saucer variety).

In his article, Simon Armando correlates alleged sightings of these stratospheric enigmas with the popularity of imaginative vehicles in the press of a particular day. In his research, Armando makes note of two distinct periods. The earliest of these exhibiting the principle of the mental set occurred in the late 1890's.

At that time, eyewitnesses would describe what they had seen but in the terms of “airships”. Such vehicles floated into the public consciousness of that era as a result of novels by the likes of Jules Verne such as *Master Of The World* and related magazine illustrations. Likewise, Armando traces the advent of the contemporary UFO described in terms of a flying saucer in a similar fashion.

The term flying saucer rocketed in popularity in the late 1940's when pilot Kenneth Arnold described his encounter over the Pacific Northwest with oblong objects that moved in a saucer-like fashion skipping over the water. For the sake of conciseness and because it was easier to role off the tongue, the phrase was shortened to “flying saucers”. However, the phrase alone was likely not enough to send the concept zooming across the horizon of the American public consciousness.

In the *Skeptic Magazine* article, the development of the flying saucer is traced back through the pulp adventure magazines of that era in general and the illustrations of

Frank R. Paul in particular. It was Paul's artistic imagination that gave these vehicles their distinctive form based on a tubular or circular design. As he developed these over time for various magazine covers, they became virtually indistinguishable from the reported UFO's. It is argued that, as these images proliferated, it is only natural that nebulous stratospheric phenomena would be construed through such a mental framework.

In ufology, the sighting of what many eyewitnesses describe as a vehicle is categorized as an encounter of the First Kind. This scale goes up in number depending upon the increasing degree of contact described in the incident. It might not be too difficult or injurious to a relationship to attempt to persuade someone that insists that what they thought they saw at a distance as an honest to goodness UFO was actually an optical illusion. However, it will take considerably more tact and delicacy when the individual confides that they did not necessarily just catch a glimpse of a streak shooting across the sky but rather experienced a direct encounter with these unsettling visitors. Making the matter even worse is not that these beings simply stopped by to take photos of the local wildlife and indigenous inhabitants but rather to violate these Earthlings in ways that would result in lengthy prison sentences or being placed on an offender registry if these transgressions had been perpetrated by a fellow human being.

Those contending that extraterrestrials are not objectively existing intelligences insist that the theory of mental sets just described can apply to those believing to have had these kinds of encounters as well. If anything, this more profound reaction on an involuntary level is evidence of just how deeply images can impact the subconscious human mind and brain.

What those claiming to have encountered extraterrestrials in this more direct manner may have actually experienced is a form of sleep paralysis known as a waking dream. During the deep stages of sleep when the Rapid Eye Movement that results in dreams occurs, under the normal conditions of health the body is for the most part paralyzed in order to prevent injury. Many have no doubt seen on the Internet or television the video of the dog running in his sleep where his movements launch him from a reclining position on the floor into the wall. Thus, imagine how much more harm the average human would get into on a nightly basis given how much more complex the dreams of the dumbest among us must be beyond the nocturnal mental meanderings of even the smartest dog if not for the preventative biological failsafe programmed into human physiology.

However, in the case of sleep walking, there are documented and anecdotal instances where these systems governing the human mind and body are out of alignment and not in sync. In the case of sleep walking, the phenomena takes place while the body is active and the mind minimally aware of what is going on. However, during a waking dream, nearly the opposite is the case. The body remains in a semi or temporary paralytic state while the mind is so active that the individual is awake yet physiologically experiencing those images and conceptual fragments that usually remain locked away until the individual has crossed well into the territory of slumber.

Finding itself experiencing this psycho-physiological malfunction, the brain optically visualizes an image that would correspond to a state of heightened anxiety and apprehension. In decades or centuries past, this terror might take the form of some kind of devil or demon given the pervasiveness of Christian symbols and iconography in

previous eras. Today, with science having provided a physical explanation for an increasing number of the things that frighten humanity the most, the idea that Satan or at least his mischievous associates are behind every last misery does not enjoy the degree of influence that it once did. However, despite all of man's technological advances, the human species has not outgrown the propensity to be frightened by stock images of beings or creatures that exist beyond the boundaries of ordinary experience. So instead of being ravished or violated by an incubus or a succubus invading one's bedchamber, in an age that has donwplayed the influence of God in nearly every area of existence but has proven unable to banish that underlying longing for a world that defies mundane explanations, it would be understandable that those afflicted by this condition might turn to space aliens or extraterrestrials to provide some kind of reason for the overwhelmingly unusual sensations that accompany this particular state of consciousness.

In this hypothesis of the UFO phenomena, Simon Armando makes the claim that nearly 95% of all alleged UFO sightings from 1947 onward through the present are explainable as natural phenomena or man-made aircraft. Those pursuing this line of argumentation would likely attribute similar statistics to those claiming to have had closer encounters of a more intimate kind. Of this mathematical fact, Simon Armando declares of those that believe in the existence of unidentified flying objects, “So they must hook their entire extraterrestrial hypothesis on the 5% of unexplainable phenomena (18).”

This snidely condescending triumphalism overlooks a fact that is still quite startling once the individual pauses to contemplate it. Of every one-hundred of these paranormal encounters, five are still without explanation to satisfy

objective detached investigators and those directly involved with the encounter alike. In other areas of applied science and technology, it would be considered irresponsible to dismiss those undergoing symptoms or exhibiting conditions considered to be outside of the normal. For example, just because the vast majority of severe headaches turn out to be something that does not require invasive medical attention, that does not mean that there are not instances where the symptoms presented are not indicators of something far more serious with a cancerous tumor being about the most terrifying cause imaginable.

Since there are admittedly a percentage of cases that defy conventional explanation, both the Christian and scientific researcher each striving to approach a world as it actually exists must attempt to provide some kind of theory or hypothesis that endeavors to address what it is exactly that those afflicted in these outlying cases might actually be experiencing. By considering a number of theories as to what these intelligences or forces might happen to be, one can hope to begin to formulate a perspective regarding this topic within the parameters of orthodox Christianity.

The most basic explanation for these encounters with beings claiming or believed to be from beyond this world that cannot be explained through the prism of more conventional science and technology is that they are exactly that. It might come as a shock. However, though it might not be the best or most comprehensive explanation given the dearth of physical evidence, the unvarnished speculations of Scripture and deductions of systematic theology as formulated in the classic trinitarianism of orthodox Christianity are not beyond accommodating a place for intelligent life beyond the human.

Scientifically, there is no reason why intelligent life

cannot exist elsewhere in the universe. Even the atheist is compelled to admit that this planet exists in such a precarious balance that those conditions seemingly exhibit a degree of deliberate aforethought and planning in order to pull off the symphony of activity and dynamism one finds in some form or another on, above, or beneath nearly every square inch of this planet. In a previous chapter especially in reference to the Drake Equation, a number of factors were touched upon that have to be just so to allow for a "Goldilock's Effect" where life such as our own could be sustained.

A reminder of these are presented by Norman Geisler and Frank Turek in an understandable manner in *I Don't Have Enough Faith To Be An Atheist*. To the scientific amateur that might at least appreciate these kinds of complexities without necessarily comprehending the exacting technicalities, such might prove to be useful. These quantifiable principles are referred to as the Anthropic Constants. For example, the oxygen level in the Earth's atmosphere is 21%. If the level was 25%, fires would break out uncontrollably; but if the oxygen level fell to 15%, human beings in the form that they now exist would be unable to breath (Geisler & Turek, 98).

Yet this is hardly the only factor contributing to make the Earth a place so many creatures call home. Even the celestial bodies closest in space with which our world continues its orbital dance having lasted millennia play such a finely-tuned role making sure things down here continue running smoothly. Geisler and Turek point out that, if the Moon was larger and closer to the Earth, its gravitational influence on the tides and atmosphere would be too traumatic; if these constraints were smaller, the hydrological and atmospheric systems on which life

depends to keep things moving would come to a halt (100).

Secularists in establishmentarian science respond that any perceived design detected merely represents the tendency of our species to read its own values back into nature and to assume it was created just for us. Such a tendency is akin to ascribing human motivation to an animal behavior. Granted, just because conditions are a certain way in the world does not necessarily mean life could not arise in an environment dramatically different than those found on this planet. For example, instead of organic lifeforms based upon carbon that abound here, a number of science fiction authors have hypothesized entire biologies where silicon or phosphorus served as the fundamental biochemical building blocks. As such, life suited to those kinds of environments would just as easily thrive there (as we do here) in conditions that would quickly result in our own demise. To the orthodox Christian believing in the possibility of biological life beyond this world, such a possibility is not necessarily a discouragement. If anything, such a possibility could attest to the power and magnificence of that particular understanding of God.

This particular line of thought is not without precedent in Christian history. At a number of points, this perspective enjoys a distinguished pedigree having been enunciated by some of the church's foremost luminaries. A number of these were highlighted in the summer 2004 newsletter of the Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences in an article titled “Exo-Theology: Speculation On Extraterrestrial Life” by Professor of Systematic Theology Ted Peters of Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary.

Peters begins his examination with an observation by Astronomer Carl Sagan that space exploration leads to

religious and philosophical questions. Apparently those are not answered in the affirmative by Paul Davies, author of *God & The New Physics*. This particular physicist is quoted as saying, "The existence of extraterrestrial intelligence would have a profound impact on religion, shattering completely the traditional perspective on God's relationship with man. The difficulties are particularly acute for Christianity, which postulates that Jesus Christ was God incarnate whose mission was to provide salvation for man on Earth (Peters, 1)." Granted, as already elaborated, one of the primary purposes for the emphasis and expansion of extraterrestrial spiritualities has been to stoke transformational social upheaval and to undermine belief in the fundamental tenets of the Christian religion. However, should a flying saucer land at the Washington monument in the nation's capital at noon tomorrow, orthodox Christianity is not without intellectual resources to weather such a challenge of profound theological and historical proportions.

It is observed that certain strands of Christian thought oppose the idea of extraterrestrial life primarily on Biblical grounds. However, that is not necessarily the case with others. As in the case of a percentage that espoused the geocentric rather than heliocentric model of the solar system, that fault cannot in all instances be laid so much at the feet of those that wanted to limit scientific knowledge to what could be deduced from the pages of the Bible. Rather, that responsibility must also be borne in good measure by those that came to revere Aristotle a little too profoundly.

According to Ted Peters, in the debate as to whether or not there was life on other worlds beyond this one, Aristotle came down on the side of "no". Aristotle, in fact, believed that there was only one world as we knew it. The esteemed

philosopher came to this conclusion by the way of the theory that there existed four simple elements of earth, water, wind, and fire. Aristotle believed each of these elements would gravitate towards its predetermined place in nature. Earth tends towards the center, fire rises to the highest level, with water and wind finding a place between these two extremes. Of this ordering, Ted Peters writes, "What results is a cosmological vision of a single reality with earth at its center. Extending out from the center we find concentric spheres until we reach the one and only heaven...Therefore, there can exist one and only one world (2)."

Thomas Aquinas is remembered as the great systematizer that applied Aristotelianism to a Christian context. This profound thinker reflected upon these assumptions in light of the foundation of divine revelation and the concerns raised by that epistemological modality. In light of scholastic Aristotelianism, Professor Peters raises the following question: is God's omnipotence compromised if God creates only one world? By definition, it would not be. For in the idea of omnipotence (meaning all powerful) is the notion that God can do anything that He pleases as He determines by His will. It is within the realm of possibility for God to either create only the world on which this particular analysis of this topic is taking place or He could create one-hundred million worlds populated with intelligent creatures that often wonder if there are other minds similar to themselves scattered across the cosmos also wondering who might be peering back at them across the universal divide.

The issue instead centers around another matter related to the nature of God. That is the matter of unity and perfection. According to Peters, Aquinas concluded that it

was necessary for all aspects of the physical creation to belong to a single world. To the medieval Christian mind, since God is Himself a unity, it was within unity that perfection was to be found. Therefore, if God was to create multiple worlds (especially if those worlds contained intelligent life), that would lead to two primary possibilities. Firstly, such would be an admission that this world that God created was not perfect. But if it was, the other worlds out there would serve as a testament to the fact that God had little problem with passing off slipshod craftsmanship.

Interestingly, the notion of intelligent life on other worlds might have actually been less earth-shattering among theologians and philosophers running in more Protestant circles less vested in maintaining the intellectual status quo though not without concerns. Inherent to Aristotelianism, and thus to its Thomistic extrapolation, was Earth being at the center. In the geocentric model of celestial mechanics, it was the Sun that revolved around the Earth. In the heliocentrism more adaptive to the emphasis upon experimentation and evidence characteristic of the dawning Scientific Age, the Earth was understood to be revolving around the Sun as just another planetary body rather than as the pivot around which the remainder of the universe turned. Protestants, for the most part, were not that concerned whether or not venerable human authorities had extended their blessing to a particular conceptual explanation regarding natural phenomena. The foremost concern of the Protestant forefathers was whether or not a concept could be justified on the basis of the Scriptures.

In his analysis, Ted Peters points out that the debate centered around the noticeable absence of what would be construed as intelligent physical biological life equivalent to man on other worlds referenced in the pages of divine

revelation (3). Proponents for the existence of extraterrestrial life in Protestant circles (if not themselves necessarily orthodox born again believers) would argue that, because the Bible did not flat out deny the possibility, it would not be an impermissible conjecture that life similar to human did indeed exist on others worlds. Thinkers originating on the Protestant side of Western Christendom's great division holding to this interpretation regarding the question of extraterrestrial life included Immanuel Kant and Richard Bently (a colleague of none other than Issac Newton).

If the primacy of Scripture among the early Protestants granted leeway for belief in extraterrestrials that was not available to Catholics at the time because of extra-Biblical epistemological commitments, it was also this foundational grounding of an emphasis upon Scripture that kept such speculation in check and from getting out of hand. As stated, the fundamental reality facing Protestants wanting to begin with unvarnished Biblical revelation as the pivot around which all other knowledge orbits regarding the existence of human-like intelligent life on other planets was that the topic was not addressed in either the affirmative or the negative in Christian Holy Writ. As Peters points out, this could result in conflict within the so-called Two Books Theory of Divine Revelation (3).

According to the Two Books Theory, the Bible was to reveal the mysteries of redemption to mankind in general and the believer in particular. Nature would more specifically convey the methods and ways through which God decided to operate within the physical and observable universe. However, if humanity was to discover either through systematic deliberate investigation or purely by accident that extraterrestrial life did indeed exist,

Protestants would be faced with the dilemma that the Book of Nature might turn out to be the more comprehensive of God's revelations to His children. Such a scenario could result in Scripture being understood in the light of Creation rather than Creation being understood through the light of Scripture.

These might have been the two basic positions regarding the question of life on other worlds immediately following the great division of Western Christendom. However, these positions have been far from stagnate. A considerable degree of revision and reconsideration has taken place since the time Martin Luther is said to have nailed his Ninety-Five Theses to the Wittenberg Church door. In a number of respects, the Roman Catholic Church has significantly altered its position on the subject of extraterrestrial life. One could even make the case that the Vatican is one of the religious institutions at the forefront of advocating for the existence of extraterrestrial life as a viable and respectable scientific hypothesis and subject of research.

One must grant that the Roman Catholic Church has made considerable strides over the centuries in transitioning away from being an institution associated with some of the most blatant attempts to suppress thought and the expansion of knowledge in human history. For example, Galileo was placed under house arrest for suggesting that the Earth revolved around the Sun rather than the Sun around the Earth. Philosopher Giordano Bruno was burned at the stake in 1600 as a heretic for speculating in part that other worlds could indeed be inhabited. Yet today, the Vatican deliberately attempts to push the limits of acceptability pertaining to these kinds of esoteric inquiries.

Previously, conclaves and assorted august meetings used to be convened by high Vatican functionaries for the

purpose of coercing those with wandering imaginations to recant of their unconventional ideas and to mete out punishment for failing to color within the established conceptual lines. Now, however, similar gatherings are called to see to what extent one can embrace the latest philosophical or scientific speculations while still remaining within the bounds of orthodoxy. Just such a meeting of the minds occurred in 2009.

According to an Associated Press article titled, "Vatican looks to heavens for signs of life" by David Ariel, the Roman Catholic Church held a five day conference within the boundaries of its Italian city-state that welcomed both Catholic and non-Catholic scholars alike in fields such as astronomy, physics, and biology for the purposes of considering the possibilities and implications of sentient life on other worlds. Instead of putting a theological foot down in emphatic opposition, the broadminded tone of the event was set by Gabriel Funes, a Jesuit priest and the Director of Astronomy at the Vatican Observatory. Father Funes has spoken in a number of public forums and media venues in favor of the existence of extraterrestrial life, a prominent one of these being an interview published in *L'Osservatore Romano* (the official newsletter of the Vatican Observatory).

In the interview, Funes suggested that the objective scientist could not rule out the possibility of life elsewhere in the physical universe. He assured that, just as we find a variety of organisms here on Earth, there could just as easily be others scattered across the cosmos. As such, even if these organisms inhabiting different worlds were intelligent, they would be no less a part of God's creation and His universe than we are.

If the Vatican and its luminaries at the forefront of this

developing field of exotheology or theology contemplating the activity of God beyond the planet Earth seem broadminded yet grounded in orthodoxy in the approach to this question to which certain answers could alter so many of the assumptions through which man relates to his Creator and the universe, a few actions have been taken and statements uttered that ought to give the religiously cautious cause for concern. For example, to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Darwin's *Origin Of Species*, the Vatican sponsored yet another conference. In terms of religion, that particular text has sparked controversy and reaction like few others in the century and a half since its initial publication. However, according to the David Ariel article, the hierarchs of the Roman Catholic Church deliberately went out of their way not to invite scholars in disciplines such as theology and science who openly questioned the legitimacy of Darwinian theory such as proponents of Creationism and Intelligent Design. Ariel writes, "Today top clergy, including Funes, openly endorse scientific ideas like the Big Bang Theory as a reasonable explanation for the creation of the universe. The theory says the universe began billions of years ago in the explosion of a single, super-dense point that contained all matter."

Young Earth Creationists and the Old Earth advocates of Intelligent Design can quibble as to whether the world was created in six literal days or whether the days spoken of in the opening portions of the Book of Genesis were more representative of vast ages in which the hand of God slowly brought into being those aspects of the physical world not bearing as directly upon doctrinal concerns. In apologetic encounters with the scientifically inclined, the Christian can even make a reference to the Big Bang in an appeal to evidence indicating an initial starting point to the universe.

However, one begins to step onto theologically thin ice if in mentioning the Big Bang ones does not take the time to differentiate the distinctions between a totally materialistic understanding of that particular cosmological concept and what the Biblically-sound Christian means by the idea of creation. For as is pointed out in the David Ariel article, the most accepted understanding of the Big Bang is that the universe began eons ago in the explosion of a singular, super-dense point that contained within it all of the matter today spread across the light years and galaxies.

Genesis 1:1 says, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Biblical, orthodox belief holds that God accomplished this ex nihilio or out of nothing preexistent. Instead, He did this solely through the power of His own Word. It says in John 1:1-3, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made." Colossians 1:17 further clarifies, "...and by him all things consist." That is to say that it is through God's power that the world all around us is held together by an act of His conscientious will.

One might try to make the case that such a passage indicating that things are held together does not necessarily address as to when physical matter came into existence. For while it cannot be disputed that God holds things together, He might be doing nothing more than imposing His creative power upon that which was already there to begin with. However, to postulate that physical matter does not find its origin in an act of God is also to posit that physical matter is at least equal to God in terms of power and existence. In such a situation, the name of God is no longer the name above all names.

Such a presupposition is fraught with a number of consequences of potentially eternal significance. Foremost, if the name of God is no longer the name above all names, then upon what grounds does the believer any longer hold to the assurance found in Acts 4:12 that there is no other name than Jesus Christ under Heaven by which men must be saved? Furthermore, if matter is not dependent upon God for its being brought into existence, on what grounds can the believer be assured that the rebellious creation will not one day topple God from His throne forevermore with the ultimate triumph of evil over good?

Any theologian, philosopher, or scientist that posits a cosmology where God does not create matter but rather where primordial unformed matter exists eternally independent of God is not firmly grounded in Biblical or orthodox Christianity as they have been led to believe. Rather, such thinkers are tottering dangerously close to another spiritual system altogether. That system is none other than some form of Platonism, a font from which so many heresies and errors flow if the insights provided by that particular philosophical outlook are not kept in check. In Platonic thought, a being referred to as the Demiurge attempts to shape the eternally existent matter in reflection of the higher order concepts known as the forms. Of this philosophy, Norman Geisler observes in *Introduction To Philosophy: A Christian Perspective*, "God has been demoted from world Creator to cosmic controller, from being transcendent over the world to one dependent upon it (283)." Thus, no matter how hard this version of God struggles to replicate the perfection of the forms in the material universe, His efforts inevitably fall short.

Earlier in this analysis, it was chronicled where this idea of God as beneficent but ultimately unable to guarantee the

fruition of His plan in an unaltered fashion leads to startling assumptions and implications in Mormon doctrine and eschatology. Its results in other forms of theism such as Roman Catholicism and mainline Protestantism are no less unsettling. When those such as Rev. Funes expound on the possibility of intelligent life elsewhere in the cosmos, it is never enough to simply leave it at that. Those of such an intellectual predisposition cannot avoid the temptation to invoke this speculation as a pretext by which to bash and criticize the human species as a whole. Not only does Rev. Funes believe that life developed elsewhere but also that it might likely be morally superior to that found here on Earth. In an article titled "Could Aliens Become Spiritual Mentors?" posted at ChristianNewsWire.com, Father Funes is quoted as saying, "There could be other beings who remained in full friendship with their creator (Talmadge)."

Granted, such could very well be the case. In his *Space Trilogy*, C.S. Lewis envisioned a space saga focusing on those planets of our own solar system that in his era were believed to be the most likely to contain intelligent life. Those worlds were of course Venus, Earth, and Mars. In these novels, each of these planets is administered under the custodianship of what is essentially a guardian or overseeing angel. Unlike the other two, Earth's own has instigated a revolt ultimately leading that particular planet into sin. The discerning Christian realizes that Lewis is alluding to Satan. The average connoisseur of speculative literature with an aversion to traditional theology through these stories will be exposed to realities of cosmic significance that they might not be willing to consider in a more conventional catechetical form. In the Lewis story, to prevent the contagion of sin from spreading beyond Earth, a bit of a quarantine has been set up around the planet cutting

it off from other worlds. Hence, one of the books in the series is titled *Out Of The Silent Planet*.

If these beings exist in an unfallen state as exotheologians such as Father Funes speculate, would these entities really want to take the risk of visiting such a world contaminated to such a deep degree by the stain of evil and sin such as our own? Both theologians and scientists would agree that extraterrestrials coming to Earth would profoundly alter the development of human society and culture from that point forward. The scientists in particular could not resist the advances in technology and knowledge these visitors would likely want to bestow to commemorate such an auspicious occasion. However, if these beings had truly never fallen out of total communion with God, upon encountering humanity, they might be the ones ending up being changed beyond recognition. And it likely would not be for the better.

For example, Romans 5:12 teaches, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Thus, if these beings had never fallen into sin or (as Father Funes puts its more upbeatedly) remained in full friendship with their Creator, it is a likely possibility they might not have ever encountered the concept of death. Would such a confrontation with this overwhelming but, to the human, most commonplace of metaphysical states send the civilization of the visitors showing up on Earth's planetary doorstep itself reeling into a profound upheaval of its own?

Would humanity's own shortcomings push the buttons of these visitors to such an extent that these otherwise perfect beings will be tempted by emotions prompting them to fulfill desires and to do things they have never wanted to do before? What will happen the first time one is cut off in

human traffic and greeted with the customary obscene hand gestures and profanity? Does a perfect physical being that is not the Christ simply shrug the encounter off like water off a duck's back? Or do such hurts and slights accumulate in an uncorrupted soul to the point where the weariness becomes so heavy that for a measure of psychological relief the finite individual says something that would be considered sin?

In the New Testament, there is a passage suggesting that precautions of modesty be taken during worship so as not to tempt the angels to sin. I Corinthians 11:10 admonishes, "For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels." So if even the angelic hosts that resisted the initial fall of that order of being into sin can still be tempted, what would protect a species similar to our own (in that they possess an inherent corporeality as a physical being) from succumbing to temptation even if that species had previously resisted the allure of darkness for millennium in an isolated corner of the universe?

This encounter with humanity could prove disastrous on so many levels. Though it may sound strange to say as it can in no way be viewed as a good thing, mankind could view it as a blessing that the fall into sin occurred as early as it did in the history of the species. For of all the divisions that have plagued humanity and sparked the most overwhelming of catastrophes such as wars and genocide, there has never been a time when two divergent strains of our species existed with one stained by sin and the other having never slipped from the state of moral perfection.

Thus, what would happen if these perfect extraterrestrials came to Earth and, as a result of humanity's corrupting influence, a percentage of them fell into sin? Provided they are similar to us in terms of being made in the image of our

shared divine creator, unless this visiting species reproduces through a process of cellular fission similar to that of bacteria, it would be safe to assume that these beings reproduce sexually through marriage sanctified via covenant. Therefore, what would happen to the matrimonial unions and families of these beings where one of the involved spouses fell into sin and the other did not?

In regards to the first human couple that plunged our species into the sorrows and travails of sin, I Timothy 2:14 explicitly points out that it was Eve who was deceived by the wiles of the Serpent into eating the forbidden fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Adam did not do so from the same position of epistemological incompleteness but rather from that of deliberative volition. He knew full well that what he was doing was wrong but proceeded to do so anyway.

The Scriptures seem to be silent regarding Adam's motive for doing so. The theologian wanting to remain on the acceptable side of orthodoxy and sound doctrine must remain tentative in handing down a pronouncement regarding the possible reason. However, the speculative nature of the curious mind cannot help but entertain a number of possible reasons. Just as the root of Eve's sin could be traced back to a desire for a status that was not intended to be hers (namely an equality with God in knowing on one's own the knowledge of good and evil), could it have been that Adam valued his relationship and love for Eve above that of his relationship with and love for God? Thus, as previously stated, should an intelligent species having never known the sting of the wages of sin ever show up on humanity's doorstep, the Earthlings would likely not be the only ones to come away from the encounter with their world forever altered in ways that

could not be rectified apart from radical divine intervention.

It is interesting how, when contemplating the possibility of a human/extraterrestrial encounter, so many positively disposed towards such an eventuality automatically assume that, just because those traveling across the cosmos posses technology superior to that utilized by humanity, it must therefore mean that these beings are somehow morally superior to or better than humanity. However, in the case of our own species, most students of history realize that technology alone does not eliminate the depths of depravity to which an intelligent species can still possibly sink. At best, these advances merely soften the blows of sin or spread them out in other directions.

For example, an industrialized or service-based free market economy might diminish the temptation on the part of most to steal basic necessities such as food from one's neighbors or unsuspecting strangers. However, it has not removed that evil desire entirely from the hearts of those that already dwell in what by any historical or global standard would be considered luxury or even opulence. It is doubtful that with his talents that Bernie Maddoff would have ever lacked for anything. Jim and Tammy Bakker, grounded in the tradition of Evangelical Charismatic Protestantism, must have known deep down that their financial shenanigans were clearly wrong. Thus, why should we assume that our metaphysical brethren (in the sense that they would have been made in the image of the same Creator) would be any different?

G.K. Chesterton observed that the notion of original sin and the depravity of man were Christian doctrines easily verifiable as a result of simply perusing a newspaper. Thus, if our cousins from across the stars are anything like us, instead of being the epitome of flawless virtue, they would

instead be profoundly damaged as a result of vice. Jeremiah 17:9 says, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” Isaiah 64:6 reminds that despite all of the nobility that we think we possess and despite all of the worthwhile things that we do, these are still as filthy rags in comparison to God's standard of perfection.

I Corinthians 15:21-22 and Romans 5:12 teach that through the first man Adam sin and death entered into the world and it was through Christ as a type of Second Adam that the redeemed would trace their spiritual lineage and that these penalties would be removed from those found in Him. Matthew 20:28 emphasizes that the Son of Man did not come to be ministered to but to minister and give His life as a ransom for many. Hebrews 9:22 further clarifies that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.

From these brief passages, the honest student of Scripture will admit that these requirements are quite specific and detailed. Though Jesus is the spotless lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world and serves as an example in conduct to all that would be identified under His name, the pivot He plays in history is derived from even more than this. Rather, that centrality emanates outward from His incarnation in a specified location in space-time in general and through His Crucifixion and Resurrection in particular. Most other world religions are not tied to the historicity of a specific singular event.

For example, the importance of Buddhism is not so much based upon what Siddhartha Guatama did for this followers. The value of this path is determined by those that follow it in terms of what it motivates them to achieve and strive for on the part of their own efforts. Thus, it does not matter so

much whether Buddha existed as an actual person or simply as a conceptual ideal of an enlightened state of benign detachment. Something similar could be said of a religion as theistically similar to Christianity as Islam. Like Christianity, Islam places considerable emphasis on the historical existence of its primary spokesman (in this particular case, that being Muhammad). But unlike Christianity and more like Buddhism, Islam is more about the message delivered by this figure than any one particular obligation he fulfilled on behalf of his followers. Orthodox Muslims view Muhammad as a highly revered man but not as God in the flesh in whom faith is placed in exchange for the forgiveness of sin and a joyful afterlife.

As ABCNews.com correspondent Brandon Keim in an article titled “Christian Theologians Prepare For Extraterrestrial Life” observes, “The central conundrum posed to Christianity by alien contact would involve the Incarnation --- the arrival of Jesus Christ as God's representative on Earth, his crucifixion, and the absolution of humanity's sin through his forgiveness.” This reality prompted the Vatican astronomer and Jesuit Guy Cosmanalgo to ruminate, “It would still be true --- but if there are other races and intelligences, then what is the meaning of this visit to our race at that time (Keim).” Cosmanalgo is saying that our understanding of these fundamental Christian doctrines would still apply to the human race but that theologians, philosophers, and the average adherents of the faith would need to work out the implications of such in relation to these visitors to our world.

Often, ideas are first proposed in speculative literature such as science fiction and fantasy before making their way into more refined academic circles in the humanities or

policy studies. One possible solution to this perplexity was offered by religious agnostic and beloved author Ray Bradbury. In a short story titled "The Man" published as part of the anthology *The Illustrated Man*, Bradbury hypothesizes that Jesus (or rather an unnamed Christlike figure) might travel from planet to planet spreading His teachings and fulfilling the requirements of the atonement and propitiation as stipulated within the context of each unique world (Ward, 178). Such an idea first expressed mid twentieth century is growing in popularity among those that give more concerted reflection to the intersections of an expanded understanding of the cosmos and the impact of such upon Christology.

Pacific Lutheran Seminary Professor Ted Peters, whose article "Exo-Theology: Speculations On Extraterrestrial Life" was referenced earlier in this examination, suggested when asked by Keim about the Christic cosmological conundrum, "Just as Jesus is human like you and I, you would find an alien-specific Jesus (Keim)." Interestingly, it seems theologians are asked this question quite often in regards to the Klingons from *Star Trek*. In his lecture titled "Did Christ Die For Klingons Too?" delivered at a symposium sponsored by the Defense Advanced Projects Agency, Philosophy Professor Christian Wiedermann of Ruhr University in Germany hypothesized that, since God is by definition infinite, perhaps Christ existed in multiple incarnations simultaneously and sovereignly orchestrated events towards a singular moment of universal atonement in terms of this soteriological act transpiring across space on all inhabited worlds (Javers).

A similar theory was promulgated in the December 2010 issue of *Christianity Today* in an article titled "Christ Of The Klingons". According to M-Theory, reality is actually

composed of a multiverse that consists of numerous universes with each governed by its own unique set of laws. Perhaps an illustration helping the individual to get their mind around such a bewildering notion is to think of our own reality as little more than a single bubble or droplet among an ocean of universes. Given such a number, it would be easy to conclude that existence is merely a matter of statistics rather than a deliberative miracle.

This theory has allowed renowned Physicist Stephen Hawking to assert with a degree of confidence that God does not exist because He does not need to. However, theists such as Gerald Cleaver and Robin Collins have latched onto M-Theory as itself providing insight into the nature of God. Of M-Theory, Physicist Gerald Cleaver remarks, "If God is truly eternal, infinite, and self-consistent, we should expect God to create eternally and infinitely or not at all (Persaud, 48). Philosopher Robin Collins adds to that perspective, "I've always had problems perceiving the infinite God that we believe in as creating life in just one spot. Over the entire past and future of humankind, there'll probably be no more than a few hundred billion humans to interact with. That is a finite number that does not make consistent theological sense to me (Persaud, 48)."

Right off the launch pad, the argument has a serious miscalculation in its theological trajectory. Cleaver and Collins are to be commended in their reverence for the infinity of God. It is easy for the Christian to lose track of that particular attribute having experientially encountered or come into a redemptive knowledge of a Savior that humbled Himself and condescended to the level of finite man in assuming the limitations ontologically inherent to such without sin according to Philippians 2:5-8. However,

from the way the argument is made by these academics as conveyed in the *Christianity Today* article, one cannot but help come to the conclusion that this God they are postulating Himself possesses needs in terms of deficiencies that must be met for continued or optimal survival.

God is not in need of a creation. Creation is in need of God. God is from everlasting to everlasting. He was not less complete in the infinite past before either humanity or the angelic hosts were spoken into existence. To signify His noncontingent completeness, God shared with Moses in Exodus 3:14, "I AM THAT I AM." To verify His own membership in the divine Godhead, Jesus Himself enunciated similar words in John 8:58 when he said, "Verily, verily I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am." Therefore, who are we as mere mortals to speculate as to what number of finite beings are sufficient to make the Almighty happy?

With such a shortcoming noted, that does not mean that the analytical analogy of Cleaver and Collins should be abandoned when battling skeptics intent on grounding the Gospel rocket before it takes off to address a number of issues raised by what is often referred to as the final frontier. If physical created beings and worlds not only stretch beyond this planet across this galaxy but also through an indeterminate number of parallel dimensions or continuums, as established previously, a number of these might also need a redeeming Messiah. Once again, speculative literature might hold the key for the believer to get a grasp upon this idea.

One of the works of modern literature beloved by both devout Christian and secular fantasist alike is *The Chronicles Of Narnia* by C.S. Lewis. Pivotal to the plot of Narnia is that realm's ultimate ruler, an anthropomorphized

lion named Aslan. However, the term might be better described as “Christopomorphized”. For the character shares a number of traits with none other than Jesus Christ. For example, in *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe*, Aslan not only lays down his life as payment in substitution for Edmond ensnared by a curse as a result of falling for the temptation offered by the White Witch (an aspiring usurper of Aslan's rightful throne). Aslan also rises in triumph over an humiliating death to foil the plot set in motion by his enemies.

With Aslan's messianic credentials spelled out in this redemption narrative, the implications of such are examined in the other volumes of the series. For example, in *The Magician's Nephew*, the reader is presented with an allegorical depiction of the multiverse when the protagonists visit the Wood Between The Worlds. In this sort of nexus between dimensions, there appear to be pools which serve as windows or portals to a wide variety of worlds. Additional hints are dropped as to Aslan's ultimate identity when it is pointed out that these disparate realms all have the same Lord. In *The Voyage Of The Dawn Treader*, Aslan counsels two of the young protagonists that, since they are nearing adulthood, they must now draw closer to him in their own world where he reveals that he is known by another name. In this creative move, Lewis reveals to the reader that the messianic parallels in the Narnia stories are more than a literary device but rather that Aslan and Jesus are in fact the same individual in two realms in the context of this particular narrative construct.

One is free to conjecture pretty much whatever one wants in the arena of imagination and still retain a legitimate claim to the veracity of one's orthodoxy by invoking artistic license and insisting such speculation is all in pursuit of

crafting a compelling story. Yet even in these doctrinally unsettled times, one would likely turn the heads of those of a steadfast faith if one admitted to professing a belief similar to that imagined by the likes of Ray Bradbury and C.S. Lewis. However, as dogmatically unhinged as the notion might seem to the average Christian with their head here down on Earth, the idea is not without a pedigree in church history.

According to Trevor Persaud in the *Christianity Today* article, since the Council of Chalcedon, distinction has been made between Christ's divine and human natures. Thus, it might stretch Christology to the breaking point. However, one might attempt to argue that, while the humanity of Jesus might be a discrete localized incarnational phenomena, that would not necessarily prevent the infinite aspects of the Only Begotten Son from incarnating in other forms for the redemptive benefit of other intelligent species. Professor Robin Collins further elaborates, "Who's going to redeem the Klingons? And they are very much in need of redemption, as we know from various *Star Trek* series. God the Son, being infinite as he is, could take on the Kingon nature...you know a Klingon version of Jesus...So the traditional formula, which is the standard orthodoxy is actually very compatible with the multiverse idea (Persaud, 48-49)."

From such glowing acceptance of theories such as the multiverse from scholars professing Christian beliefs in fields such as theoretical physics and speculative philosophy, one might have the impression that it is all smooth sailing at light speed through hyperspace to the acceptance of the possibility of biological extraterrestrial life elsewhere in the universe or how many realms of corporeal physicality one might find under the broader

banner of creation. However, conservative Evangelicalism's most rigorous forms such as those identified as Fundamentalist fire the retrorockets on that enthusiasm and in reference to the possibility of multiple Messianic incarnations with a rather hearty “most likely not”. Evangelist Oliver B. Green wrote a pamphlet titled *Is There Life On Other Planets?* detailing a standard Fundamentalist response to this conundrum. Though published some time ago since he himself has been in Glory for decades, this work is still informative by providing insight into this mindset by raising a number of cautions that Christians ought to consider when approaching this topic.

It was Oliver Greene's contention that intelligent biological life does not exist on other planets. The evangelist built his case beginning with Psalm 115:16. The text reads, “The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord's; but the earth he hath given to the children of men.” Greene interprets the verse in the following manner. “The heaven” is the heaven in which God dwells and “the heavens” (note the plural) is a reference to the expanse of space above the Earth (15). The text is explicit in pointing out that these realms fall under the authority of God's direct control.

The Earth, however, is another matter. The passage decrees that the Earth is man's to exercise dominion over in a way that the other two realms are not. Man's relationship to the Earth extends beyond simply being plopped down in the midst of the Garden and ruling over it henceforward. Rather there is a profound interconnectedness between the two as revealed in Genesis 2:7 where it says, “And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.”

Greene notes that God did not make man from Martian soil or Jovian soil but rather from the dust of the Earth (15). Even the most enthusiastic of astrobiologists are forced to concede that as of yet they have not discovered a world (especially in our own solar system) where man would be capable of existing in such relative ease. Even on a world as similar to Earth in a cosmic sense such as Mars, man would not be able to endure long without radical technological intervention such as temperature control and a supplemental contained atmosphere.

Oliver Green's interpretation of the so-called Creation Mandate is so adamant and strict that the reader comes away with the impression that this particular evangelist was not much of a fan of the space program or of exploration. Greene's contention is that our era was not the first in which man attempted to conquer space. As proof, Greene sites the account elaborated in Genesis 11 where the followers of Nimrod gathered to build a tower that would extend into Heaven.

What the passage describes could have very well been more than the customary pyramid or ziggurat envisioned as built by the early civilizations that arose following the dispersal of man across the face of the Earth after the judgment of diverse tongues described in the passage. What the postdiluvian generation imagined might have been a space elevator. Man might have been developing at such a breakneck speed surpassing even the rate characterizing the world of today that God was prompted to record in Genesis 11:6, "...and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do." Irrespective of what form this blasphemous contraption might have taken if it had not been stopped from above, Greene describes the mindset prompting this kind of undertaking as one marked

by extreme human ability and profound spiritual ignorance (16).

Oliver Greene's argument that there is likely no other intelligent biological life in the universe is based on more than that man's essential physical nature is intertwined with that of the Earth. The evangelist also links his assertion to reasoning derived from the Incarnation, Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ as the focal point of temporal and cosmic history. The Biblical text of John 3:16 reads, "For God so love the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Dr. Greene insists that, where the text reads "world", the passage could just as properly read "Earth". Thus, "For God so loved the EARTH [and by extension those inhabitants native to it] that he gave his only begotten Son."

The possibility was raised in previous pages that perhaps Jesus Christ visited other inhabited worlds of the cosmos where He carried out similar redemptive works. Greene does not believe this to be a possibility. II Timothy 3:16 reads, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." Greene believes that God's word is complete and comprehensive enough as divine revelation that, if other worlds existed inhabited by intelligent physical life comparable to our own also in need of redemption, the Bible would have included some mention of such a truth that would impact man's understanding of reality in such a profound manner.

As further proof of his argument, Oliver Greene references a number of points made in Revelation 21. The chapter starts in the first verse, "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were

passed away: and there was no more sea." The text continues later in verses 24 and 25, "And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it...And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there." In this passage, the discerning student does not find anything indicating that there will be a new moon, a new sun, or even a new Jupiter or Mars. Of this new Heaven, many dispensational fundamentalists such as Oliver Greene believe that this celestial city will hang suspended in the sky above the Earth. Visually, this might even appear in a manner not unlike a gigantic mothership as depicted in many science fiction movies employing this kind of imagery.

Those that dwell in the city of Heaven or the New Jerusalem will be those saved prior to the Rapture or at least those dying before Christ's return. On the new Earth will primarily dwell the children of Israel, brought to faith during the Tribulation through the ministry of the 144,000 and Gentile allies that survive history's darkest hour. Over the course of this golden Millennial Age, this surviving remnant will finally enjoy the full habitation of the boundaries extending approximately from the Nile River to the Euphrates as promised to Abraham according to Genesis 15:18. Of the Heavenly City, it says in Revelation 21:24 that the nations of the saved will walk in its light and that the kings of the earth will bring their honor to it. It must be pointed out that there is no mention of emissaries from the Klingon homeworld or even little green men from the red soils of Mars stopping by for a guided tour.

Among the assorted proponents of those advocating a place for extraterrestrial biological life within their respective theologies, one cannot help but notice a disdain for those holding traditionalist theologies broadly

categorized as “fundamentalist” even if the adherents of those maligned perspectives do not necessarily identify with that particular term. For example, in regards to the conferences sponsored by the Vatican to discuss these kinds of scientific issues, Creationists were deliberately excluded from participation. Granted, one might have a concern that stereotypical fundamentalists known more for raising their decibels to get their point across might cause a disruption. However, the Ken Ham versus Bill Nye debate on evolution proves that there has arisen a generation of Christian thinkers who hold to a traditional understanding of the Genesis account and who also value the insights investigative science can provide into understanding the complexities of God's creation. And as was caught on the video of an evangelistic outreach at a major university, secularist academics are just as capable of becoming mentally unglued as the most backwoods Baptist should they find their most cherished assumptions being challenged. Yet even insinuations from scholars at institutions as steeped in traditional Christian backgrounds as Baylor University and Messiah College, as highlighted in the *Christianity Today* article “Christ Of The Klingons”, perpetuate the impression that the primary threat to planetary security does not come from beyond the boundaries of Earth's atmosphere but rather from those that question the likelihood of such on religious grounds.

These fundamentalists are viewed as such a threat that Ted Peters in his article “Exo-Theology: Speculations On Extraterrestrial Life” granted that particular theological classification its own section. The reader comes away from the article with the impression that Roman Catholics and mainline Protestants may have more in common with one another than the Protestants and the fundamentalists even

though most fundamentalists would view their own religious identity as at least originating from within the Protestant tradition. For the most part, Peters observes fundamentalism's view regarding the possibility of extraterrestrial life as inverse to Erich Van Daniken's chariots of the gods hypothesis by labeling it as “the chariots of Satan”.

Peters describes cautionary Fundamentalist and conservative Evangelical analysis of the UFO phenomena as “Christian terror literature”. Of these publications, Peters writes, “This literature sought to frighten Christian readers into disbelief in ETI [extraterrestrial intelligence], and in so doing to capitalize on the fascination that usually accompanies fright (6).” It is interesting to note how this observation is worded in such a way that it sounds like only ignorant hillbilly preachers are out to turn a buck or to manipulate the otherwise unsuspecting into doing what it is that these particular sectarians desire.

But what about the Vatican? Can the discerning honestly assure that that particular institution that has honed a specific ability to take advantage of and survive nearly any political situation imaginable for centuries is not now positioning itself in such a manner for the day when large motherships park themselves above Earth's most prominent cities as depicted on the reimagined version of *V* broadcast on ABC? If nothing else, one is not going to convince too many people that the Vatican (nor any other religious institution for that matter) would refrain from selling assorted UFO souvenirs and trinkets in its gift shop to scholars visiting to address the topic at such a prestigious conference.

Likewise, Christian Fundamentalsits are not the only ones willing to invoke UFO's in order to elicit fear

responses for the purposes of advancing a predetermined agenda. For example, NASA functionaries have suggested that, if humanity does not comply with the carbon emissions standards technocrats insist are necessary to stave off the ravages of climate change, extraterrestrials might arrive in orbit demanding compliance with such at the business end of a laser gun or photon torpedo. This was pretty much the plot of the Keanu Reeves remake of "The Day The Earth Stood Still". In the film, extraterrestrials arrive on Earth to preserve a portion of the planet's biodiversity in ark-like vessels while using nanotech swarms (microscopic robots capable of manipulating matter on the molecular level) to disintegrate offending fossil fuel technologies and even human beings perceived to impede this agenda. In the original version of the film, similar threats were made to the nations of the world if they could not get their act together in regards to nuclear proliferation.

As much as it pains sympathizers and advocates of exotheology to admit, Fundamentalist opposition to the theory of extraterrestrial life as biological in nature is not without valid reservations. Ted Peters begrudgingly admits, "It seems to me that the fundamentalist interpreters perceive acutely the salvific structure inherent to the UFO myth in our society, and further, that this myth stands at some variance with what Christians want to teach. For this the appropriate response is Christian apocalyptic theology to be sure (7)." As with so many of the other questions regarding what it means to be a Christian in an era of profound intellectual and technological change, depositions attempting to answer interrogatories regarding the possibility of life elsewhere in the universe from a theological perspective will seemingly form around the established cleavages of liberalism and conservatism for

lack of better terms.

Chapter 6:
Under The Microscope:
A Consideration Of What The UFO Phenomena Might Actually Be

At this point in this journey spanning not only the corners of this universe but also the thresholds of what the human mind would perceive as neighboring realities altogether, it might be time to elaborate upon what exactly an individual or even the world on a broader scale sometime in the future might encounter when confronted with some kind of intelligence insisting that it originates from a locality other than this planet. From the previous chapter, given the nature of the God professed by Christian theology, the Christian should concede to the possibility of biological life elsewhere in the physical universe. However, perhaps the more important question with which to grapple in regards to this phenomena now or at some indeterminate moment in the future is whether or not man has had an encounter with such or something else altogether.

Works of fiction have a profound ability to convey truths in an understandable manner that may not be as quickly assimilated via standard scientific treatise. A Christian novel titled *The Last Star* by William Proctor examines what might unfold should what would be considered an extraterrestrial intelligence attempt to establish basic contact with life here on Earth. In the novel, a team of scientists consisting of both Christian believers and religious skeptics is dispatched to Israel in the attempt to analyze a mysterious light in the sky that can be seen all over Earth but which seems to be concentrated over the Holy Land. Significant portions of the narrative consist of an almost Socratic dialog between the various scientists

relating the enigma that the characters are investigating to assorted theories regarding the Star of Bethlehem mentioned in the second chapter of the Gospel of Matthew. Eventually the discussion turns to the possibility of the luminous curiosity being some kind of UFO.

Of such a potentiality, one of the characters expounds, "Extraterrestrial visitors from our own universe are pretty much a practical impossibility (Proctor, 160)." The following is added as an explanation for such a conjecture: "Assume there are one million separate alien civilizations in our galaxy. Finally, consider the vast distances that would have to be covered and...that it's probably not possible for anything in our universe to travel faster than the speed of light. In some cases it would take hundreds of thousands of years for a vehicle traveling at the speed of light to reach us (Proctor, 161)." The character making this argument comes to the conclusion that, "So even if you make these generous assumptions --- which are very optimistic --- each of these one million civilizations would have to send out about ten thousand spacehsips every year for even one UFO to make it to earth every year (Proctor, 161)."

Yet, if even a small percentage of extraterrestrial reports are to be taken at face value, it would seem that among inhabited worlds Earth must be something akin to Florida. By that, it seems our world is where the interplanetary riffraff come for spring break in the hopes of hooking up with the locals or where residents of a variety of interplanetary empires hope to save up enough in order to retire to. As interesting is that not everyone that reports to have had an encounter with an extraterrestrial describes these creatures in the same way. Granted, a number describe the typical short, bulbous-headed, gray-skinned creatures collectively referred to as "Greys". Others

describe muscular, scaly beings referred to as “Reptilians”. Still others in ufological circles reference tall blond humanoids known as “Nordics”.

If nothing else, such a convergence of activity should serve as an indication that, for some reason, this planet and those that dwell upon it are of interest to powerful intellects beyond the human species. The question becomes more of a matter of from where do these originate? From the answers provided by the humans claiming to speak on behalf of these entities, those approaching this issue seriously should not conclude that these visitors are necessarily from a physical world similar to our own capable of sustaining conventional biological life. For example, in previous decades it was speculated that, since Mars and Venus were the planets of our solar system most like Earth in terms of material composition, it would be logical that these worlds might also be the respective homes of some manner of corporeal intelligence.

In *UFO's & The Alien Agenda,* controversialist Bob Larson traces contemporary UFO spirituality to Emanuel Swedenborg, a Lutheran minister that eventually fell off the deep end into apostasy (177). Through spiritualist practices such as automatic writing and astral projection (where the individual believes that he is traveling outside of the physical body), Swedenborg came to believe that he was in contact with angels that took him on a grand tour of the solar system. The result of this trek not so much among the stars but rather between the planets was a book titled *Arcana Celestria: The Earth In The Universe*. The text was something of an interplanetary travel guide, even going into detail regarding Martian anatomy and the way of life on the Red Planet (Larson, 178).

Swedenborg's followers would expand upon his

teachings and descriptions regarding Mars. One such disciple was Helene Smith, a French medium in the 1890's. Her own astral meanderings were claimed to be so vivid that she was not only able to sketch images of the flora and fauna that she encountered but was supposedly also able to communicate in the Martian language that she had picked up while visiting there. But given that there are few confirmed native speakers of Martian nor many tenured university professors specializing in this particular tongue, the accuracy of her linguistic felicity would have been near impossible to substantiate.

Since Earth rests between two worlds similar to it in terms of size and superficial appearance, it is only natural that, while the attention of some turned to Mars, the imaginations of others were drawn in the direction of Venus. Though many tend to think of Mars as the setting from which numerous alien invasion stories would commence as exemplified by *The War Of The Worlds*, a case could be made that that the Venusianists have had a far more profound influence on world events and spirituality.

The name Helena Petrovana Blavatsky might not be one that is brought up regularly in the course of casual dinner conversation or even in most university courses on the history of the contemporary world. However, it is one that has influenced this age in subtle ways that the average individual is probably not aware of. Blavatksy's claim to fame was as a founder of the Theosophical Society.

The Theosophical Society, founded in 1875, was an organization that promoted teachings derived from the spiritualism popular in that day. This perspective consisted of much more than the parlor tricks that often accompanied séances claiming to contact the dead. Blavatsky believed that, while on a pilgrimage to Tibet to familiarize herself

with the esoteric wisdom of the East, she was contacted by disembodied higher order beings that she referred to as "mahatmas" (Larson, 180). Blavatsky's system ties in with the broader world of extraterrestrial spirituality in that Venus was claimed to be the home of the Ascended Masters she served who dispatched from there the Lords of the Seven Rays to convey their teachings to humanity through the likes of Blavatsky. It would be easy to dismiss Blavatsky as eccentric at best and those drawn to her message as easily suggestible or deluded. However, the extent to which a Blavatskyian ideology would come to permeate the ranks of the elite is downright startling.

The Theosophical Society, founded in New York in 1875, was eventually moved to India where it would come under the leadership of Annie Bessant following Blavatsky's death. Of particular interest, Bessant was also a member of the British Fabian Society (Brooke, 168). The Fabian Society was itself a political organization that advocated for a form of socialism similar to Marxism. Yet they also differed from the Marxists in that the Fabians believed comprehensive societal transformation could be brought about through means less violent than those advocated by Marxism. For example, Fabians favored education and the electoral process rather than explicit revolutionary upheaval. Members of the Theosophical Society believed spirituality and religion could also be used as tools in the pursuit of achieving this goal.

Foremost among the teachings of those that trace their lineage back through the Theosophical Society is the promise of a planetary leader destined to bring the world to a golden age where mankind will eventually live in harmony with one another and enjoy the fruits of fulfilled potential. The identity of this messianic figure has changed

over time and in regards to the particular faction or offshoot of the Theosophical movement under consideration. For example, early on it was believed especially by Annie Bessant and her closest associates that a powerful being named Lord Maitreya would possess a young Indian named Jiddhu Krishnamurti (Brooke, 169). It was hoped that Krishnamurti would take Maitreya's message of love, brotherhood, and the unity of all religions to the four corners of the world. That plan was derailed when Krishnamurti turned on his handlers, no longer wanting to be Maitreya's vessel and claiming no recollection of memories prior to 1929.

Theosophy's desire for a New World Order did not wane nor subside. Alice Bailey set out on her own to establish the Luicuous Trust which at its core originated with the Lucifer Publishing Company at one point owned directly by the Theosophical Society. Her activities through that particular branch of the movement exerted a profound influence over the establishment of the United Nations near which the remnant of her organization is still headquartered.

To this day from time to time, newspaper readers still occasionally stumble upon full page advertisements promising that the great teacher Maitreya is on the verge of revealing himself to an awaiting planet. It seems the date is continually delayed and pushed back, the excuse being that humanity has not yet reached a satisfactory level of consciousness deemed worthy of the guidance of this superior being. The skeptical might respond that such a day is likely never to arrive and that this anticipated promise is instead merely a tactic to take advantage of the cash that flows freely from those caught up in the frenzy of millenarian expectation. However, there was at least one branch of the family tree of Theosophical occultism that

played a role in actualizing at least one interpretation of a New World Order. The result was a tragedy on a scale that the world has rarely seen.

In much of its doctrine and public teaching, Theosophy emphasized global unity and the seeming brotherhood of all humanity. However, upon more cautious reflection in hindsight, the adherents of this movement held to a number of beliefs that would be considered downright disturbing in today's moral mainstream where the vast majority tend to believe that at least on an ontological or biological level all people are equal in terms of shared or common human essence even if some cultures or ways of life are better than others. Theosophy, on the other hand, held that humanity traces its ancestry back to a number of root races. For example, the Teutonics trace their ancestry back to the Aryans who were the descendants of the Atlanteans who were themselves the progeny of the Lemurians (Van Baalen, 65). The races existing prior to these were not quite yet fully human and thus of an inferior stock producing a less sophisticated culture and level of accomplishment.

To the student of contemporary history, this line of propaganda rings with a disturbing familiarity. For with a dash of frothing hostility and a sprinkling of brutal fanaticism added to the mix, this particular belief is not that appreciably different than the core Nazi ideology. It is not a stretch to link the esoteric speculations of the Theosophical Society with the Nazi Party.

The bridge linking the two together was a German occultic organization known as the Thule Society, The Thule Society adopted and expanded upon Blavatsky's racial theories regarding Aryan cultural superiority being the result of Atlantean heritage. The organization's name was derived from the Greco-Roman term “Ultima Thule”

used to describe the lands of the far north in the works of Virgil.

The Thule Society believed that a great leader would emerge that would lead the Teutonic people in general and Germany in particular to eventual world dominance. In pursuit of that goal, the society's members were required to swear an oath that their family lines had not been contaminated by Jews or other so-called colored races. To move the group's ideas from the realm of the theoretical to the actualized, members of the Thule Society established the German Workers' Party which would later be renamed the National Socialist German Workers' Party. The world would come to fear and loathe it as the Nazi Party.

Some relish the field of history not so much as a resource from which to draw cautionary insights but rather to revel in sticky detail in the attempt to undermine the legitimacy of any such observations. For example, it is claimed in the Thule Society's Wikipedia entry that there is no evidence that Adolf Hitler ever attended a single Thule meeting and that the organization was eventually outlawed by Nazi legislation abolishing secret societies such as the Masons in 1935. However, it cannot be denied that the Thule Society was a parent of this belligerent child and, as such, Blavatksy's Theosophical Society somewhat of a grandparent in the background even if not directly responsible for the actions of those taking the philosophical seeds of this poisoned plant to full bloom.

Even if Adolf Hitler did not participate first hand in laying the mystical occultic foundations of this ideological toxin that he would be responsible for spreading, a number of the Fuehrer's closest advisors, associates and members of his administration were pivotal in the activities of these kinds of organizations. For example, Rudolf Hess, the

bumbling unibrowed Deputy Fuehrer of the Third Reich (sort of the regime's version of Joe Biden), was a member of the Thule Society. Member Karl Harrer was also a founder of the Nazi Party. Dietrich Eckart, a Thule member, groomed Hitler in perfecting the oratorical style that would seduce a nation and was the person to whom Hitler dedicated *Mein Kampf*. If not a member but rather a guest at Thule Society meetings on occasion, Alfred Rosenberg would play a pivotal role as a Nazi ideologue attempting to formulate a philosophical veneer for the movement in the attempt to cloak its convoluted savagery with a facade of respectability. And perhaps the most infamous figure of them all goose stepping through the revolving door between the Thule Society and the Nazi Party was none other than Heinrich Himmler himself. It was by combining the occultic mysticism of the Thule Society with the disciplinary structure of the Jesuits that this sadist was able to conjure the infamous SS to which the most ruthless and dedicated Nazi's aspired. Though this tangent has meandered to an extent from the primary focus of this examination, it was in a sense essential in order to provide an historically tangible example of the destruction likely to result when man consults intelligences beyond his own grounded in a source other than the revelation of the triune Godhead.

Just as contemporary explorations of Mars proved that the Red Planet was a barren wasteland not only devoid of intelligent life but even likely that of a microbial variety, Venus also proved to be just as barren despite being named after the goddess of love and sensuality from Greco-Roman mythology. For the clouds concealing her wonders and delights from onlookers did not hide lush jungles or vast swamps teeming with life. From this established pattern of

these intelligences claiming to be from worlds beyond Earth that ultimately prove to be quite lifeless upon objective investigation, the researcher open to the possibility of contact with intelligences other than our own is forced to consider yet another hypothesis. That is these beings may be of a nature transcending conventional understandings of biology or even those of physics in regards to quantifiable categories such as space and substance.

In theosophical speculation, it is taught that the Lords of Venus guiding humanity along the path of revelatory enlightenment themselves answer to a being of a yet still higher order referred to as Sanat Kumara. His position along the chain of being and consciousness is roughly equivalent to the lord of the world. Such a conceptual formulation could very well be the key that cracks open what could be behind what is perceived as extraterrestrials and UFO's.

When considering the topic of extraterrestrials and UFO's, the workaday materialist assumes that these creatures must come from a world similar to our own possessing attributes such as physical form and embodied existence. However, some of the most influential voices in all of ufology have suggested that the percentage of UFO's that defied conventional explanation were of a phenomena establishment science has not yet started to comprehend. Two of the foremost thinkers holding to this perspective were Jacques Vallee and J. Allen Hynek.

Jacques Vallee was a French researcher that endeavored to approach the UFO phenomena emphasizing the objectivity of dispassionate science. On the one hand, he did not want to rush headlong into conclusions promoted by many that derive their life's meaning from these paranormal encounters. But neither did Vallee want to side with those

so dead set against the possibility that there is a reality to these accounts that they were willing to threaten eyewitnesses and tamper with collected data.

From his investigation into nearly 2000 contact cases, Vallee noticed the similarity of these with the accounts of those that in times long ago insisted upon having had an encounter with a being once perceived as more magical in nature such as a fairy or an elf. Vallee is quoted in *Unholy Spirits: Occultism & New Age Humanism* as saying, "Why is it...that the occupants of UFO's behave so much like the denizens of fairy tales and the elves of ancient folklore? Why is the picture we can form of their world so much closer to the medieval concept of *Magonia,* the magical land above the clouds, than a description of an extraterrestrial planetary environment (North, 315)?"

Many predisposed in favor of UFO's assure that the purpose of these contact efforts is for the visitors to learn more about humanity and to possibly bestow upon us as a species advanced technology beyond our wildest imagination. Jacques Vallee was not quite so sure. From his analysis, Vallee concluded that the UFO phenomena above everything else was about psychological conditioning. Of this conditioning, Vallee suggested that the obscurity and confusion surrounding these encounters is deliberate in order to gain the desired control while keeping the precise mechanics hidden (North, 315). Of Vallee's conclusion, Bill Myers and David Wimbish write in *The Dark Side Of The Supernatural: What Is Of God & What Isn't*, "...in his book *Messengers Of Deception*, he [Jacques Vallee] proposed the idea that UFO's are part of a master plan to sweep away the earth's old social order, including all existing religions to make room for the new (75)."

Vallee deduced that UFO activity assisted in

accomplishing this goal in a number of ways (North, 320). First, the UFO phenomena undermines a foundational presupposition of the modern era that man is the master of his own destiny. But instead of turning to God to fulfill that role, those buying into this worldview bestow that reverence upon these entities whatever they might be.

Secondly, increased awareness of UFO activity promotes the efforts of globalism and planetary unification. No longer are believers by default considered prime candidates for psychiatric evaluation as evidenced by conferences convened by institutions as prestigious as the Vatican and the Pentagon. Even a figure as conservative as President Ronald Reagan hypothesized before the General Assembly of the United Nations that the arrival of visitors from outer space would do more to draw the world together as one than any other conceivable event likely ever would.

A third consequence postulated by Vallee foresaw the increasingly religious nature of the groups and organizations established by assorted contactees and allied enthusiasts. Not only is this true of the admittedly faith-based sects examined previously in the pages of this analysis such as the Raelians or the Scientologists. It is to an extent also true of the less deliberately spiritual or religious organizations such as the Mutual UFO Network (also referred to as MUFON) that provide enthusiasts with a vehicle through which contactees can try to make sense of their respective experiences and to provide support for one another in a manner not all that dissimilar to a more religious community such as a church or a synagogue.

In a sense the greatest danger presented by UFO spiritualities is the way in which they imperil the eternal souls of those that profess belief in them. However, as Vallee suggests, nearly as dangerous is the way in which

these creeds can be utilized to promote a totalitarian technocratic elitism that could theoretically undermine democracy and constitutional republicanism. It is a tragedy for one person to throw away his life in pursuit of such theological poison. However, should a sufficient number begin to march in the same direction, eventually a critical mass is reached where the lives of those not believing in these kinds of worldviews also begin to be effected. Such an impact would largely be negative for such noncomformists as they would grow to be seen as a dangerous opposition to the fanatical majority or even a small clique organized enough to seize power.

As to what exactly Vallee believed UFO phenomena to be other than a conveyance for some manner of entity is somewhat vague and tentative. Vallee suggested that UFO's represented a reality that transcended the conventional understanding of the physical universe, even going beyond what we perceive as time and space (North, 319). Vallee insisted that this phenomena is completely natural and represents a realm of awareness that most humans have not yet developed the ability to tap into or understand. It is a dimension of conception that is as much shaped by the contactees that have encountered this plane beyond normality as it has influenced those advanced or enlightened enough to experience this profound perception.

Intertwined with and closely related to the work of Jacques Vallee was that of J. Allen Hynek, a Professor of Astronomy at Northwestern University. Hynek's connection with the UFO phenomena began as the scientist and public relations officer employed by the Air Force to explain away UFO's in terms of conventional science. That earned him the nickname of “Swamp Gas Hynek” in reference to that particular explanation (North, 309).

For over twenty years, Hynek dutifully enunciated statements verbally formulated to placate his Pentagon handlers. However, his tune changed noticeably with the closure of Project Blue Book. The deliberate cessation of that research effort in part convinced Hynek that the government was not interested in pursuing the truth wherever scientific objectivity might have led but rather in covering up the ineptitude of the bureaucracy and in stonewalling the public from realizing that there might be something to this potential threat after all.

To borrow language from those advancing alternative lifestyles, Hynek's "coming out" occurred with the publication of his book *The UFO Experience: A Scientific Inquiry*. One of its chapter titles would come to hold a place in the American cultural vernacular when addressing this particular topic. That chapter was titled "Close Encounters Of The Third Kind", popularized by the Stephen Spielberg film of that same name.

Also worthy of note is that the works of both Vallee and Hynek were not initially published by some New Age publisher with a name hinting at Wiccan or some similar variety of esoteric paganism. Rather, their works were disseminated by none other than Regnery Publishing (North, 310). For those that are unaware, Regnery is one of the most prominent conservative publishing houses in America. That itself raises a number of advantages as well as challenges for the Christian attempting to approach this issue from a Biblical perspective.

Granted, to this day, Regnery might not possess the scope of influence of a publisher controlled by the prevailing media establishment. However, given that the intended audience would be more disposed towards commonsense realism and skepticism towards entrenched elites, the reader

might have an assurance that the claims this esteemed bibliographic imprint would stake its reputation on would possess a degree of credibility in terms of the conjectures and conclusions put forward by these scholars of the unconventional. But with that going for these treatises, yet another set of challenges must also be addressed.

Both Vallee and Hynek might have raised an alternative to the hypothesis pervasive in ufolological circles that these objects are vehicles transporting biological entities traversing this physical universe. However, neither of these thinkers publicly professed belief in Christ as Lord and Savior. Thus, that might mean that there could be elements in the broader conservative movement willing to accept less than complete answers to these questions that raise issues of ultimate concern in a society that has grown so technologically advanced that secularist science faces the possibility of warping back on itself into the mystical. From that observation, the deduction could be drawn that there could arise a time in which the Conservatism that has drawn so much inspiration from the Christian tradition and walked so closely with the faith through the hostility of the contemporary era could very well turn against Christianity in order to protect its own commercial or political interests.

Ufologists in the Vallee and Hynek camp do not conjecture that UFO's come from other planets per say. Rather, it is the contention of such researchers that these beings are more than likely transdimensional in nature. Similar to the multiverse hypothesis, transdimensionality posits that there are parallel realities or planes existing beside our own that can either intersect with ours or can be connected to it by a portal allowing travel from one realm to the other. What the human being perceives as a flying saucer could very well be just such a conduit rather than a

traditional vehicular conveyance. From his studies, Hynek concluded, “I am very much afraid that the UFO's are related to psychic phenomena. Certainly the phenomena has psychic aspects..for instance, UFO's seem to materialize and dematerialize (Myers, 76).” Whatever UFO's might be, a scientist credentialed in Astronomy such as Hynek has pointed out that UFO's exhibit a number of attributes that put them at odds with what would be considered conventional science, technology, and engineering. The quote mentions the ability to materialize and dematerialize. However, these are not the only characteristics defying explanation.

For example, if some reports are to be believed, a number of UFO's have made ninety degree turns at speeds estimated to be near 18,0000 miles per hour. Bill Myers and David Wimbush note in *The Dark Side Of The Supernatural: What Is Of God And What Isn't* that no object that human science understands as physical could survive such a maneuver. They write, “A person inside a spacecraft that did make a turn like that would have to be scraped off the walls with a spatula. A solid ball of steel can't survive a right angle turn at only 5000 miles per hour (Myers, 70).” Such abrupt movements bring to mind the wheels mentioned in Ezekiel 1:15-21 which the text describes as moving straight in whatever direction they happened to fly. From the standpoint of the viewer, such alterations in trajectory would very much look like a ninety degree turn.

The believer, if felt so called, is free to engage in debate as to the possibility of intelligent life beyond this world from the perspective of physical evidence and from deductions derived from the presuppositions of Christian theology or philosophy. However, for the most comprehensive understanding, Christians are advised to

build their case first and foremost on what divine revelation might have to say regarding any given topic.

Up to this point, this analysis has examined the issue of life beyond this world primarily from the standpoint of scientific evidence regarding the possibility and the potential sociological implications of such. Since matters of belief in the contemporary era cannot be separated from these areas of inquiry, matters of religion and theology have been touched upon where these intersect with the issue of intelligent life apart from that of the human species. Since the purpose of this undertaking is in part to formulate an Evangelical apologetic, the point has been reached where the Christian Scriptures will be consulted and applied in a more direct and deliberate manner.

From its opening chapter, the Bible without hesitation pronounces that there is intelligent life in the universe beyond that of humanity. Genesis 1:1 declares, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." That text insists that the Divinity was more involved in the moment of cosmic ignition and the days that followed than some metaphysical jumper cable that got things started but then left them to run on their own as suggested by those such as deists or theistic evolutionists.

During each day of the creation account in the opening chapter of the Book of Genesis, the reader sees God acting with aforethought to set the stage for each successive level of His masterpiece. For example, on the first day God created light and separated it from darkness; then on the second He established the division separating the waters of the expanse known as the sky from the waters below. From the setting of this initial stage, on the third day God further divided the realm beneath the expanse of the sky by gathering the waters into their place He called the sea and

by lifting the ground above the sea but placed below the sky that He called land.

Despite this miracle of our physical realm brought into existence, the reader learns from the Genesis account that God was just getting started. His even more impressive creations were just around the chronological corner. That would consist of nothing less than physical life itself. For at the end of the third day, it was revealed that the purpose of the land in part was to produce plants bearing seeds and trees bringing forth fruit.

Yet even at this point, God had not yet completed His task of establishing a framework where each component would be dependent upon that which came before it and would play a role as determined by His sustaining providence in continuing the existence of the others. A primary characteristic of plants is that they need light and even periods of darkness to exist and to maintain their assorted biological functions such as photosynthesis. During the first day of creation, God did indeed create day and night, light and dark. However, beyond that declaration, the reader is not provided with much detail as to the nature of this primordial division.

On the fourth day of creation, God dedicated His work to detailing how the mechanics between this most fundamental of divisions would be worked out and governed. The greater light (known as the sun) would rule the day. The lesser light (known as the moon) would govern the night. Along with these, God also made the stars. The movement of these bodies across the sky would also assist in the tracking of seasons, days, and years.

Most think of the moon primarily in this role as the light that diminishes the encompassing darkness of the night. However, it plays perhaps an even more substantial role in

governing the tides. It is the orbit of the moon around the Earth with the accompanying pull of gravity that is responsible for this ebbing and flowing of water. Without this motion, waters would grow still and stagnate. If God was finished at this point, either condition really would not matter one way or the other. However, this hydrodynamic circulation resulting in the cleansing and replenishment of the areas in which it would take place would be vital for the next days and stages of creation.

Starting on the fifth day of creation, God would introduce the element that would distinguish this world in the solar system and the reason why conditions on this planet needed to be established with meticulous and astounding precision. God could have spoken every level of creation into existence simultaneously in a split second if He so desired. Yet by building to a crescendo, He bestows upon we finite beings a more profound understanding of how each of these layers as designed is dependent upon the others for continuation.

On the fifth day, God declared in Genesis 1:20, "Let the water teem with living creatures, and let the birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky (NIV)." The next few verses clarify that this included all of the living creatures that move through the water (all of which are not fish but also aquatic mammals such as whales) and the birds (all of which are winged but do not necessarily fly such as penguins and ostriches).

The introduction of embodied physical life was such a marvelous event that God decided that this would occur over the span of two complete days. On the sixth day, God created the animals that move along the ground as their primary mode of locomotion. This included both the wild animals and those that would come to be thought of as

livestock, according to Genesis 1:24-25. As in regards to the birds and the aquatic life, God saw that these were also good. Yet with fish swimming along, birds flying about, and likely nearly every variety of furry beast scurrying around (or at least the predecessors from which the contemporary variations are derived), God was still not quite finished.

With everything else now in place, the time was right for God like the ultimate showman to unveil His greatest masterpiece of the physical creation. At that perfect moment and not a second before, God said in Genesis 1:26, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." As with the animals, God blessed man to be fruitful and to multiply so as to increase across the face of the Earth. However, the blessing bestowed upon man went beyond that bestowed upon all other forms of life.

Most obviously, the text indicates that man was to oversee the physical world and other organisms dwelling in that realm on God's behalf. Man was granted this stewardship over the Earth because he possessed a quality that separated him and elevated him above the other physical beings. This aspect of man's nature he shared with God but in a place of subordination to the divine being.

In saying that man was created in the image of God, it must be made explicit that before Christ's incarnation God was not an embodied physical being. John 4:24 teaches that God is a spirit and must be worshiped in spirit and in truth. However, in today's post-Christian religious milieu this dogma cannot be emphasized enough.

Earlier in this analysis, it was pointed out that the Mormons believe that the being that their sect venerates as

God himself began as a man like ourselves who ultimately advanced to such a deified state. Unfortunately, there are also those in positions of leadership in churches claiming to profess traditional formulations of Christianity that also advocate a version of this errant doctrine. At one point, televangelist Kenneth Copeland taught the idea that God was about 200 pounds, stood six feet two inches, and had a hand span of about nine inches (Hanegraaff, *Christianity In Crisis*, 121).

Rather, in saying that man was created in the image of God, what the passage is conveying is that our very life essence is a finite reflection of God's own. Genesis 2:7 teaches, "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." From that transference of life, man took on a number of characteristics that set him apart from other physical beings. The most important of which were the ability to make moral decisions and the possession of a life from the moment of its conception that would never cease to exist. Yet it must be remembered that the life and spirit that man does posses is an image of that of God's and, as such, in subordination to that of deity. It is because of this contingent nature where man is not complete in himself that it is God that determines both the moral parameters of man's existence and the stipulations as to the nature of the conditions under which the individual will experience the majority of this life interminable.

Throughout this exposition, it has become apparent that one of the ongoing perplexities with which the human species continues to grapple is whether there is intelligent life other than and beyond our own. From the opening passages of the Book of Genesis, the reader discovers that, not only does this eternal life exist, but that we were created

by its ultimate expression. Disappointed sophisticates might snap that traditional orthodox conceptions of God were not what they had in mind when formulating this profound question. And although the Bible is ultimately and most explicitly about man's relationship with his Creator and Redeemer, this foundational text also provides insight regarding another form of intelligent life existing parallel to and in certain instances intersecting with that of our own that could also very well provide an explanation to so many of the questions surrounding the enigmas of so-called UFO's and extraterrestrial life.

Adam and Eve, the first human couple, were directly created by the hand of God. Adam was formed from the dust of the ground according to Genesis 2:7 and Eve from one of Adam's ribs according to Genesis 2:21-22. Together, the couple had everything wholesome that a person undefiled by sin could desire. They had one another in a delightful natural surrounding likely in the vicinity of the gentle animals that Adam had initially been given the task of naming. The communion this couple shared with God was so direct that the Lord communicated with them verbally at that point without His word having to be relayed through written medium. From the impression given in Genesis 3:8-10, they would even meet regularly with Him in the Garden in the cool of the day. However, even this did not prove to be enough for the budding human species.

Amidst such a setting of satisfaction, contentment and fulfillment, at that particular time God required that man observe only one “Thou shalt not”. For in the original state of perfection, the species did not require the extensive lists characterizing the later divinely revealed moral and legal code since humanity had not yet acquired an inclination towards forbidden things. In Genesis 2:16-17, Adam was

instructed regarding this one forbidden thing when the Lord God commanded, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.”

Though the human species must bear the weight of the penalty for what was about to transpire in the text, it is a safe and reasonable conjecture that the primary catalyst and facilitator was one of the very lifeforms of interest to this discussion possessed of an intelligence neither God nor man. In terms of a literary perspective, no later than the conclusion of man's more detailed creation account in Genesis 2 and the very opening of Genesis 3:1, the reader learns of the snake in the garden. In fact, it is from that very verbal formulation that one is overcome with a sense of ominous foreboding.

Genesis 3:1 says, “Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made.” The serpent said to Eve, “Did God really say, 'You must not eat fruit from any tree in the garden'?” This interrogatory was not enunciated to solicit information for the purposes of clarification. Rather, it was designed to lead the intended it was asked of to a conclusion that she might not have otherwise thought to under other circumstances.

For as soon as the woman answered that God did indeed allow herself and Adam to eat from the trees of the garden, the serpent found the hook into which he could sink his fangs in order to lead the stewards of the garden into embracing a mindset contrary to what they had been commanded by God. The woman made the initial error of adding to God's explicit command to Adam about not eating the forbidden fruit the stipulation that neither were they to touch it as well. To this, the serpent further assured that surely she would not die. Instead, she would become like

God, knowing comprehensively the distinctions between good and evil.

The proverbial wheels in the mind of the first woman no doubt began to spin as she weighed the options of either obeying what she knew God expected of the couple or giving in to the nagging suspicions that the serpent had whispered in her ear that God was being less than completely honest by withholding something wondrous for His enjoyment alone. The next step down the chain of causality into error no doubt occurred when Eve violated the standard she had formulated but which God Himself had said nothing about when she touched the fruit and realized she had not been struck dead. It was probably at that point that the decision in her mind was finalized and she proceeded onward through the point of no return when she ate the fruit.

Often in depictions of this tragedy, Eve is portrayed as having been beguiled by the snake all on her lonesome. Adam is nowhere in sight. He only succumbs to temptation later on no doubt as a result of the application of both Eve's feminine charms as well as the irritable nagging for which those of her particular gender are infamous.

However, if the Genesis account is to be taken in a literal sense, the reader is told in Genesis 3:6, “She also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate it.” In other words, Adam was right there with her the entire time. Not only did Adam willingly eat of the fruit knowing full well that what the serpent was hissing in his wife's ear was inaccurate. From the record, he did not even put forward any verbal effort to prevent the mistake that would plague mankind throughout recorded history. For it is pointed out in I Timothy 2:14 that it was Eve who had been the deceived party. It was actually through Adam that the stain

of sin infected the human race according to Romans 5:12 and I Corinthians 15:21-22.

Along with the punishment handed down to man (Adam) with the ground being cursed so that his work to acquire sustenance would be burdensome and to the woman (who would now be named "Eve" because she would become the mother of all the living) that childbirth would be painful and that she would be ruled over by her husband, God also enacted a punishment against the serpent that would frame much of the drama of human history and provide the background motivating a significant percentage of the supernatural phenomena that in the contemporary era would be interpreted as extraterrestrial in origin. In his judgment upon the serpent, God ruled in Genesis 3:14-15, "Cursed are you above all the livestock and wild animals. You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and hers; and he will crush your head and you will strike his heel."

Genesis 3:14 has sparked many a heated Sunday school or Bible study group debate as to whether or not snakes as we know them today at one time walked upon legs in a manner similar to nearly all other terrestrially-dwelling vertebrates. However, the portion of that curse with the greatest bearing upon not only the topic at hand but all of the cosmos is to be found in Genesis 3:15. For what the student of Scripture finds in the passage is the first messianic prophecy briefly detailing one of the foremost missions of the promised deliverer.

From the opening clause of that particular verse, an adversarial relationship is established between the serpent and the woman. It would seem that around these archetypal figures or banners would gather of those coming after two

great multitudes at hostile variance with one another. This imagery is further expanded upon and explained in Revelation 12:1-17. In the passage, depicted is a pregnant woman about to deliver a child. Before her appears a ten-headed dragon ready to consume the child at the moment of his birth.

The text also provides additional insight into just exactly whom a number of these figures happen to be. As to the identity of the child, it is said in Revelation 12:5, "She gave birth to a son, a male child, who will rule all the nations with an iron scepter. And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne." That, of course, would be none other than Jesus Christ. For it says in Isaiah 9:6 that the government will be on His shoulders and in Revelation 19:16 Jesus is referred to as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Interestingly, the passage is probably even more explicit regarding the identity of the red dragon. Revelation 12:9 bluntly explains, "The great dragon was hurled down --- that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him." And from earlier in the chapter in verses three and four it is alluded that, in his celestial uprising, the Old Deluder convinced a third of the angelic hosts to join him in his futile rebellion as described in Isaiah 14:12-15.

It could be argued that the identity of the woman could be open to a bit more interpretation. There is the most literal understanding in terms of the woman through which Jesus came into the world in human form. This would, of course, be none other than the Virgin Mary. In Luke 1:26-38, the angel Gabriel appeared before her to announce that the Holy Spirit would come upon her in her state yet to have been touched in the most profound intimacy of

marriage to conceive the Son of God who would rule from the throne of David over the house of Jacob. In part to show that nothing is impossible for God as stated in Luke 1:37, God chose to move upon her in this fashion in the fulfillment of prophecy. For it was announced in Isaiah 7:14 that a virgin shall conceive.

Since the child's father was none other than God Himself, the child did not suffer from the curse of sin as did those tracing their patrimonial heritage back to Adam. This was done for more than cosmetic effect so that human beings might have a godfigure that they could relate to. Though there is indeed comfort in knowing that our Lord knows first hand the afflictions and trials we endure throughout our sojourn in this fallen world, He came for reasons beyond that of setting a good example.

Matthew 20:28 points out, "Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many." Hebrews 9:22 further teaches that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. It is Christ's taking on human form through the vessel of Mary that the consequences of sin are ultimately alleviated. I Corinthians 15:21-22 teaches, "For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive."

Despite his delusions of grandiosity, the Devil is in effect a defeated adversary despite the destruction and ruined lives trailing in his blood-soaked wake. Revelation 12:12 says, "Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury because he knows that his time is short." Because of his defeat by the ultimate power of God, the dragon (Satan) takes out his

frustration on the next best thing. Revelation 12:17 reads, "Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring --- those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus."

The passage operates on a number of levels. As part of the Book of Revelation, dispensationalist scholars believe that the text is referencing eschatological events yet to take place in mentioning the hurried indignation of the Great Deceiver as elaborated in the chapter to follow detailing the rise of the Beast and the Harlot that rides it. In another sense, an argument can be made that the poetic description is of a truth best categorized as historical. If so, as well as being thought of as Mary through whom Christ entered physically into the world, the woman could also be thought of as the nation of Israel. For it is through the nation of Israel that all the peoples and families of the world would be blessed according to Genesis 12:3 and Genesis 22:18.

This passage of Revelation under consideration also speaks to one of the profound tragedies that has often marred the pages of history. For if the woman can be interpreted not just as the Virgin Mary but also the nation of Israel as well as a people selected by God for the purposes of bringing the very means of salvation into the world, the text also provides an explanation for the persistence of Antisemitism. Revelation 12:13 says, "When the dragon saw that he had been hurled down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child." This animosity continues in Revelation 12:17 where the text indicates that the dragon attempted to sweep the woman away with a great torrent like a river. The Dragon has always made it a strategy to either destroy or even pollute the lineage from which the Redeemer would emerge or to

wipe out as many as possible identifying with the Bride of Christ or the nation of Israel. In these attempts, he is not unlike the artificial intelligence Skynet in the *Terminator* series that sent the homicidal cyborgs back in time to eliminate the mother of John Connor (another "J.C." if you will destined to deliver mankind from a profound evil) before the awaited deliverer could even be born.

As detailed, the most concrete interpretations of the woman described in the twelfth chapter of the Book of Revelation would be Mary as the one through which Christ came into the world or even the nation of Israel as the group through which God began the work of sanctifying a people unto Himself. However, is a sense, Eve is also deserving of an honorable mention in contemplating this profound symbolic truth. For as one recalls of the curse placed upon Satan, it stipulated in Genesis 3:15, "And I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and hers; and he will crush your head and you will strike his heel." Therefore, the scenes for this conflict spanning the cosmos were set into motion even long before the initially barren couple from Ur of the Chaldees heard the call of God to leave their country, their people and even their father's household so that God could make them a great nation through which the entire world would be blessed (Genesis 12:1-4).

After being expelled from the Garden of Eden, even if those early humans ignored much of what God had told them, they were certainly observant in heeding God's directive to be fruitful and multiple as first commanded in Genesis 1:28. From the first two human beings of Adam and Eve emerged in the opening portions of chapter four first Cain followed by Abel. However, in the span of the lives of the first family, any hopes of domestic tranquility

humanity might have had did not last very long.

Sadly, sibling rivalry would come to be a social and psychological reality plaguing human relationships nearly from the start of the story of the species. Adam's first child (Cain) had what might be considered a green thumb while the next child mentioned in the record (Abel) was more adept in the field of animal husbandry. But there is more going on in the text than an account of divergent career paths that would lead to the epic antagonism between the brothers. It would seem that either by the example set by God making garments of animal skins for Adam and Eve to cover themselves as described in Genesis 3:21 or perhaps as a result of some other direct divine primordial command to which the historical record is not explicitly privy that some system of rudimentary sacrifice or tribute as a form of gratitude had been established.

In Genesis 4:3-8, the text reveals that Cain brought some of his fruits as an offering to the Lord while Abel brought some of his flock. God looked with favor upon Abel's sacrifice but was not so pleased with what Cain had provided. As a result, anger festered in Cain's heart. God warned Cain that, if Cain did what was right, Cain would be accepted; but if Cain did not master the sin crouching to ensnare him, that he would be consumed by this spirit of malignancy.

In a cursory analysis of this passage, the easiest conclusion to draw as to why God was not pleased with Cain's offering was that he offered the Lord literal fruits whereas Abel offered what would come to be considered a more traditional sacrifice. After all, Hebrews 9:22 reminds that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. However, God could have been just as displeased as to the spirit or attitude with which Cain brought his offering

(and perhaps even more so) as he was with what Cain actually brought.

The text hints briefly at such a possibility. Genesis 4:3 says, “In the course of time Cain brought some fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord.” One would probably just consider that an objective statement of fact until it is compared with how Abel's sacrifice is described in the next verse. The first sentence of Genesis 4:4 reads, “But Abel brought fat portions from some of the first born of his flock.” From that, the impression taken is that to Abel expressing gratitude towards God was a priority. However, with Cain, it sounds like thanking God might have been something that Cain got around to when Cain got around to it. Furthermore, Abel's sacrifice sounded to be of the best of his selection; from the word “some” used to describe Cain's, his produce might have even been leftover cast offs more suited for the supermarket discount pile.

Rather than taking into consideration God's gentle chastisement, Cain decided to pursue another course of action plunging himself deeper into sin. Cain lured his brother out to the field where he proceeded to murder Abel. Despite likely committing the deed away from what he thought were prying eyes, Cain's actions did not escape notice. With the skills of a seasoned litigator, God proceeded to ask regarding the first homicide a number of pointed questions based upon forensic evidence that Cain could not refute or deny.

As punishment, Cain was ostracized from the family settlement. God pronounced against him in Genesis 4:11-12, “Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground which opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless

wanderer on the earth." The shock of the punishment was more than Cain thought he could bare. He snapped back as such to God, threatening in Genesis 4:14 that an extensive manhunt would ensue likely to result in what would today be categorized as suicide by cop.

Aware of what Cain actually desired, God replied that Cain's prediction would not be the case. A judgment seven times worse would be leveled upon those that would take the law into their own hands imposing a punishment in the case of Cain that God had not intended. To make sure no one inadvertently killed Cain given that Cain might have been so despondent that he might have tried to provoke others into killing him, God placed some kind of mark upon Cain to remind those encountering the fugitive of the risk of an entangling homicidal encounter. Beyond that, the student of Scripture is not provided any clarifying detail as to what that mark might have looked like.

Upon the rendering of the sentence, Genesis 4:16 informs that Cain left the Lord's presence and dwelt in the land of Nod. From a fleshly perspective, Cain's life following the murder of his brother Abel might not have been what he expected given his hint that he would likely meet his end in a blaze of glory. Even though Cain was exiled, it seems that he was not alone. Genesis 4:17 indicates that Cain and his wife frolicked with one another and she had a son. From the text that follows, it seems that Cain's life of wandering was not necessarily one on the run but rather of a habitation beyond what he may have originally considered home. For around the same time that Cain's wife was delivering their son, the passage announcing the birth also instructs that Cain was building a city that he named after the lad.

On an episode of "The Simspons", Homer wanted to be listening to the Bible the night he mistakenly thought his

life was ending but instead he fell asleep upon hearing the recitation of the genealogies. It is just as easy for anyone's attention to wander during the consideration of these passages chronicling the begetting of the barely pronounceable names. However, from this kind of list provided in the opening portion of the Book of Genesis beginning with our original foreparents in the Garden of Eden initially so innocent that they did not even know that they were naked, the observant reader can see a rudimentary culture and civilization beginning to take form.

In Genesis 4:20, Cain's descendant Jabal is introduced. Of him, it is said that he was the father of those who live in tents and raise livestock. Such a description is reminiscent of a nomadic herdsman. His bother Jubal is described as the father of those who play the harp and lute. That would mean culture and technology had developed advanced enough that humanity had sufficient time for leisure pursuits beyond the minimal necessities of survival. This could have been thanks in part to the efforts of their half-brother Tubal-Cain. Of him, Genesis 4:22 says that he forged all manner of tools from bronze and iron.

Cain's was by no means the only branch of the human family tree. As in the case of any parents, Adam and Eve were no doubt devastated by the death of a child. That pain was likely intensified by the crime being perpetrated by none other than their first born. Yet, with God's help, the couple struggled on.

In Genesis 4:25, a glimpse is provided of the precarious intermingling of joy and loss that has characterized the human condition from its earliest times. The text hints that Adam and Eve no doubt sought comfort with one another, resulting in the birth of an additional son named Seth. Even in that blessed event, the tragedy striking the first family

was immortalized in the words spoken by these parents in reflecting on the loss of one son's life as that of another's was just beginning. It is said in Genesis 4:25, “God has granted me another child in the place of Abel, since Cain killed him.”

In the cursory understanding of the Bible retained by a significant percentage of the general population, what is still remembered at least to a degree are the outlines of the prominent narratives rather than the fine details. For example, most of the culturally literate likely recall that Adam and Eve had two sons named Cain and Abel and that Cain killed Abel. And that is where the knowledge of most regarding the first family from which each of us traces our ancestry tends to end. A smaller percentage a bit more acquainted with the divine text might recall Seth as the child born following the introduction of homicide as a regular plot element of the continuing human story. However, the detail that throws many a believer along with the skeptic seeking to drag the faithful down with them into the ranks of apostasy is from whence did Cain's wife come?

The inquiry is often posited by those enamored with evolutionary theory for the purposes of undermining the legitimacy of a literal interpretation and understanding of the Genesis creation account. As noted, in Genesis 3:20, Adam named his wife “Eve” because she would become the mother of all the living. Those raising this question hope to plant a seed of doubt attempting to push the more vehemently theistic into a conceptual corner where they will be required to relent that there must have been another population of humans nearby or at least a community of Neanderthals that were not that unattractive given the right light and suggestive mood music playing in the background. However, a moderately careful reading of the text easily

resolves this dilemma. Genesis 5:4 says, "After Seth was born, Adam lived 800 years and had other sons and daughters."

There are a number of critical insights and observations that need to be deduced from the Biblical recitation of that particular historical fact. The most obvious is that Adam and Eve had a number of children that were not directly referenced by individual specific name. Secondly, though the fact might be frowned upon in contemporary times, not a single female child directly fathered by Adam seems to be mentioned in the opening chapters of the Book of Genesis. Eve is not even mentioned in the genealogy from Adam to Noah recorded in Genesis 5. From the time Eve makes a few brief remarks, not another woman speaks in the pages of Scripture until Sarai proposes that Abram romp with Hagar in the attempt to use the maidservant as a surrogate mother in Genesis 16:2.

Next, from the opening of Genesis 5 it can be assumed that, just because a person is not directly named, that does not mean that they did not exist. For example, Cain is not mentioned in chapter five because his line is listed in chapter four. Neither is Abel mentioned in chapter five, possibly because he was murdered before fathering any children.

Readers might question what does this detailed diversion have to do with an assessment of extraterrestrial spirituality? After being created as good, the fall of mankind into sin was influenced by an intelligence beyond the species. This early introduction of evil led to the branching of that initial couple into two distinct lineages that set the stage for what a number of theologians and Bible scholars would consider one of the most dramatic and direct incursions of non-human intelligences into this realm

to date and what might serve as a blueprint for yet another attempt to do so as this age draws ever closer to its inevitable close.

Genesis 6 opens with the following: "When man began to increase in number on the earth and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose." This idea is further expanded in Genesis 6:4 which reads, "The Nephilim were on the earth in those days --- and also afterward --- when the sons of God went to the daughters of men and had children by them. They were the heroes of old, men of renown." These verses have intrigued readers for centuries and have inspired a number of divergent interpretations.

The most straightforward understanding of the passage might conclude that the narrative was referring to an intermingling between the lines of Seth and the lines of Cain. For example, Genesis 4:26 concludes that chapter by informing, "Seth also had a son, and he named him Enosh. At that time men began to call upon the name of the Lord." Therefore, as in the case of even our own era, families often continue in the spiritual course mapped out or embarked upon by particularly influential progenitors. With Adam continuing on close to God despite having fallen into sin and Seth being seen as a blessing to console the grief over the loss of a notedly devout son, it would logically follow that this line of descendants would be established in the paths of righteousness. As such, they could be appropriately categorized as the sons of God. After all, I John 3:1 says, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God."

Likewise, given the incident where Cain acted out on his

homicidal impulses rather than repenting of their root cause as counseled by no less than the Almighty Himself, perhaps Cain's more lustful approach to life and problem solving were passed along to his progeny in how they were raised. As such, perhaps they could have been viewed as children of men in recognition of their tendency to wallow in the assorted depravities for which our species is infamous. For example, the Lamech in the line of Cain seems to have been a particularly bawdy character. For he not only committed the first recorded act of polygamy in Genesis 4:19, but like his ancestor Cain, he also killed another human being according to Genesis 4:23.

When something bad, tragic or unfortunate transpires, the philosophically inclined ruminate that it is not like the unsettling occurrence has not happened before. However, if this instance under consideration goes with the interpretation that what is being described in Genesis 6 is how godly individuals can be lured away from what they know to be right by an imprudent attraction towards potential mates that are worldly, this may indeed be the first occurrence of this phenomena recorded in history. This pattern where a righteous person of God was led astray by a seductress or seducer is a narrative familiar throughout the pages of Scripture. For example, Samson never really could overcome his fascination with Philistine women. Ironically, King Solomon composed passage after passage in the Proverbs warning young men to avoid the snares of the harlot; yet he proved that, in terms of actual life application, he was not wiser than any other man in regards to these carnal dangers when his foreign wives sent him awhoring after their own false gods.

Other theologians believe that there is more going on in this passage than the first recorded incident of widespread

moral decline. Noah Hutchings of Southwest Radio Church Ministries writes in *Pandemonium's Engine: Satan's Imminent & Final Assault On The Creation Of God*, "Some try to explain the Nephilim of Genesis 6 and afterwards as being the children between a union of godly men and women marrying ungodly men and women. The children of both godly and ungodly parents are born in the same hospital. Yet I have never heard a doctor announce in the hospital waiting room, 'You are the proud parents of a bouncing, sixty-six pound Nephilim (255-256).'." Though possessing the deportment of a humble yet affable country preacher, Noah Hutchings is alluding to a shocking and significant truth. What he is suggesting is that these Nephilim could very well be the hybridized offspring of human beings and fallen angelic entities referred to in Christian circles as demons.

Conventional Sunday school teachings of this Genesis vignette evoke fewer uncomfortable questions from the minds of inquisitive youth. These interpretations even provide an upright example for the young and old alike to emulate in their own lives set against the backdrop of a morally licentious culture. Such an understanding is buttressed by the way the translation is rendered in the New International Version. In that, Genesis 6:9 reads, "This is the account of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his day and he walked with God."

The King James Bible, on the other hand, renders Genesis 6:9 as follows: "These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God." Both versions of the verse convey the essential truth that Noah was an upright individual that strove to please God. However, the verbal formulation provided by the King James might provide a keener insight

as to a more comprehensive understanding of what may have been transpiring at that particular moment in cosmic history.

The first part of the passage describing Noah is a declaration regarding his moral character. The second clause is a bit more baffling. For starters, if interpreted as a description of Noah's moral character, would it not be flat out incorrect? Romans 3:10 makes it explicitly clear that no one is righteous, no not one. Even later on in his life, though he stood as a man of faith in that wicked day, the student of Scripture is reminded that (like the remainder of us) Noah was far from perfect.

For example, Genesis 9:20-21 reads, “Noah, a man of the soil, proceeded to plant a vineyard. When he drank some of its wine, he became drunk and lay unconscious inside his tent.” There has been many a debate and likely even church splits as to the propriety of the believer partaking of alcoholic beverages. One end of the spectrum advocates for the outright prohibition of such noxious liquids and the other celebrates their open enjoyment (in moderation of course). However, it cannot be denied that the Bible is explicit in its command not to be drunk with wine according to Ephesians 5:18. Therefore, that pretty much tosses cold water on the theory that “perfect in his generations” was a remark regarding Noah's personal virtue.

The term “generations” is related to the process through which new life is brought into the world and the end product thereof. The term “generation” can also admittedly be used in reference to the spirit of an age as in referring to the death and despondency following World War I as the “Lost Generation” or the refrain in the Hippie anthem “Talkin 'bout my generation”. Given the topic previously mentioned in this portion of Genesis regarding the

cohabitation of the sons of God and the daughters of men and the results of such, it is this aspect of Noah and his lineage that might very well be being addressed. There must have been something profoundly corrupt beyond sin's normal depths of depravity for God to resort to destroying all but a remnant of the entire creation in what amounted to a reboot of nearly the entire global system rather than a targeted people such as a nation or empire as in most other instances of social collapse and judgment throughout history.

There are allusions and hints elsewhere that something may have transpired between humans and angelic beings that went beyond the "normal" evils into which these respective forms of intelligent life are capable of descending. Prominent among these cryptic hints can be found a verse from the Epistle of Jude that sets out to remind of the punishments reserved for those characterized by a deliberate godlessness in the intention of their actions. Jude 1:6 warns, "And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day."

It is suggested in Matthew 25:41 that Hell was most specifically created for the Devil and his angels. Yet the corpus of Scripture is replete with examples where a number of these rebellious intelligences have not yet been detained in some manner of pretrial confinement in a netherworld holding facility. A foremost account of such can be found in the Book of Job. Job 1:6-7 reads, "One day the angels came to present themselves before the Lord and Satan came also with them. The Lord said to Satan, 'Where have you come from?' Satan answered the Lord, 'From roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it.'"

Interestingly, the King James Version translates the text as "the sons of God" rather than as "angels" and the NIV in footnote "a" connected with Job 1:6 confirms that phraseology as valid and similar to that encountered in Genesis 6.

Elsewhere in Scripture, the narrative seems to indicate that Satan is not yet confined to the realm of punishment. For example, in Matthew 4:1-11, Jesus endures temptation at the hands of Satan while fasting in the desert. In the encounter, Satan seems quite free in his movements, presuming for himself the role of a tour guide in his attempt to drag the Only Begotten down into sin.

Satan takes Christ to the highest point in Jerusalem where he tries to goad the Messiah into proving who He is by flinging Himself towards the ground from such heights so angels will swoop in to His rescue. When Jesus rhetorically deflects Satan by reminding the Old Deluder of the command about not putting God to the test, Satan then takes Jesus to a high mountain where the Devil shows Christ the kingdoms of the world. Beelzebub promises to give these to Jesus if Jesus would only bow down and worship the Dragon. By this round of the encounter, Jesus has had enough and orders Satan to buzz off while reminding of the command to "Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only (Matthew 4:10)."

This is not the last time in Scripture that Satan is depicted as active on the terrestrial plane. Referenced earlier, in Revelation 12, the student of Scripture is provided with a symbolic description of the cosmic struggle involving Satan, Israel, and Christ. Revelation 12:7-9 specifically references a great war in Heaven where Michael and the angels hurl Satan to the Earth below. Theologians could possibly debate whether this is a description of Satan's

initial rebellion or perhaps a future assault set to take place around the time of the Great Tribulation since in Revelation 13 one reads of the Beast out of the Sea and the Beast out of the Earth (the Antichrist and the False Prophet) who wreak havoc upon the world at that time on behalf of their dark master and with his assistance. Revelation 12:12 says, "Therefore, rejoice you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short." As such, it is clear from that passage that Satan is not yet confined to the realm of spiritual punishment.

In debates centering around the existence of Hell, those with a more liberal and less orthodox theological inclination often argue in favor of the assumption that Hell does not exist as an actual place but rather as how we perceive the world in which we presently find ourselves. Likewise, some innovative interpreter might make a strained analogy that the Earth itself might be a realm of infernal suffering for a being such as Satan that had known prior to his banishment only Heaven's undiminished perfection. However, such a line of reasoning would be refuted in the case of Christ's encounter with the Gadarene demoniac as chronicled in Luke 8:26-39.

As Jesus was exorcising these spirits from this man, Christ inquired as to the name of the entity. They responded "Legion" because many demons had entered into this victim. According to Luke 8:31, these beings pleaded repeatedly with Jesus not to order them into the Abyss. Instead, they wanted to indwell a herd of nearby swine. From this, two conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, for the demons to be so concerned about being tossed into the Abyss or Hell prior to the day of explicit judgment, that

would likely mean some were already being detained in that sector of the netherworld. Secondly, if these beings were so unsettled at the prospect of being driven from their original host that they were eager to possess a herd swine, that must mean that there is some aspect of embodiment that they find to be overwhelmingly desirable.

Nor does the account of Noah seem to be the last incident mentioned in Scripture alluding to the hybridization of different intelligent species even though the practice was likely not as pervasive as it was at the time of the Deluge. The practice seems to have taken place among Israel's Canaanite adversaries. Gary Stearman in the chapter of *Pandemonium's Engine* titled "The Folly Of Synthetic Life: Genetic Tampering Ancient & Modern" writes, "Giants were very much a part of the ancient world, they were always considered a scourge upon humanity...These beings, generally referred to as the 'rephain', are the descendants of illicit unions between fallen angels and human beings (141)."

Such entities were once more encountered during Israel's entrance into the Promised Land following the Exodus. The spies sent to reconnoiter the Promised Land by Moses at the Lord's command noted in their post action analysis, according to Numbers 13:28, "But the people who live there are powerful, and the cities are fortified and very large. We even saw the descendants of Anak there." A little more context is provided as to just exactly who those were when it is recorded in Numbers 13:33, "We saw the Nephilim, (the descendants of Anak came from the Nephilim). We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them."

From the New Testament in particular, the believer is taught that God is a God of mercy and forgiveness to those

that call upon His name to be saved. Even in those instances where He dispensed punishment it is usually emphasized that it was the result of an individual's own transgressions. As such, some of the most troubling and challenging passages of Scripture are those in which God deliberately instructed the nation of Israel to kill entire populations. For example, Joshua 6:17 says, "The city and all that are in it are to be devoted to the Lord. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in the house shall be spared because she hid the spies we sent." Jericho was not the only city to receive such judgment. The Lord Himself instructed in Joshua 8:1-2, "Do not be afraid...Take the whole army with you, and go up and attack Ai. For I have delivered into your hands the king of Ai, his people, and his land. You shall do to Ai ... as you did to Jericho...except that you may carry off their plunder and livestock for yourselves."

In the contemporary Western world that was once Christianized and which sill exhibits considerable Christian influence despite rapid abandonment of that foundation, almost no situation could be hypothesized to justify the deliberate extermination of an adversary's civilian population (especially the exceedingly young incapable of understanding the implications of military strategy and geopolitics). It is, therefore, a shock to the conscience that the same source that teaches the world of God's love and forgiveness also details that this is the very same God that sanctioned the brutal demise of those not yet old enough to even know anything about the world around them. But what if the contamination of such people was so complete that nothing could be done for them and the people around them in need of protection from the same thing happening to them for the sake of all of mankind? Furthermore, what

if a single person foretold to be born among a sanctified people needed to be protected above all the others so that the entire world might one day be blessed?

In the understanding that is widespread today as a result of considerable struggle, conflict and ethical introspection, the overwhelming majority that profess faith in the God of the Bible believe that in God's sight (in the words of the New Testament) that there is neither Greek nor Jew. This is because, as Paul pronounces before the Areopagus in Acts 17:26, "From one man he made every nation of men that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live." As such, even if they do not think all that highly of the practice, other than perhaps a snide remark or two, those desiring to retain a relatively good standing in polite Evangelical circles are not really going to do much these days that would prevent a person from marrying someone of an ethnic or racial background other than their own if that was what floated a person's boat in terms of marital prospects.

However, the nation of Israel is commanded in Exodus 34:15-16, "Be careful not to make a treaty with those that live in the land; for when they prostitute themselves to their gods and sacrifice to them, they will invite you and you will eat their sacrifices. And when you chose some of their daughters as wives for your sons and those daughters prostitute themselves to their gods, they will lead your sons to do the same." The sternness of this command is reemphasized in Deuteronomy 7:1-4 when it directs regarding the Promised Land's original inhabitants, "Make no treaty with them, and show them no mercy. Do not intermarry with them. Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons, for they will turn

your sons away from following me to serve other gods, and the Lord's anger will burn against you and will quickly destroy you."

The Lord could have had a purpose beyond the obvious spiritual preservation of particular individuals psychologically drawn to and aroused by the culturally exotic. As mentioned previously in particular reference to the symbolic image detailed in Revelation 12 of the dragon poised to devour the woman giving birth, Satan and those allied with him had as a key priority the elimination of the Messiah so that the soterioligical mission of history's incarnate lynch pin might be thwarted. Therefore, it was imperative for this cosmic purpose that Israel be preserved as a distinct remnant people.

Yet what if Satan and his henchmen had devised a secondary strategy where, if the plan to eliminate the Messiah by eliminating His people was not successful, they could at least attempt to derail the economy of salvation? These malignant entities might attempt to do this by introducing a corruption that in their estimation could detour this sacred gift in a direction never intended by the Almighty. Had this secondary plan been successful, Satan himself might have been able to stake a legitimate claim to the promises of salvation.

One of the foremost objections that could be raised regarding human/angelic hybridization is the question is it even possible for humans and angels to reproduce together? Such an objection is indeed valid. After all, while residing on planet Earth, the optimal functioning of a human being is contingent upon a physical body. Angels reside primarily in the realm of the spirit or at least seem to possess an incorporeality that leaves them undetectable in most cases by the majority of the human species. As such, it would be

a reasonable conjecture that they do not possess the physiological mechanics necessary to procreate.

Secondly, marriage is defined in the eyes of God as a bond between a man and a woman for the purposes of a relationship developing as a result of the drive towards sexual compatibility. While marriage is not based upon sex and must transcend the physical act if the union is to be successful, it exists in large part as an institution to channel the carnal impulses in such a manner so as to optimize the positive outcomes for the involved parties and any resultant children. In regards to the temporeality of marriage, Christ Himself responded in Matthew 22:30 to the Sadducees who attempted to confound Him with the perplexity of whose wife the woman that married a succession of seven deceased brothers would be in eternity, "At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven."

Such a response on the part of the Lord could cause one to naturally conclude that angels do not possess anatomical gender. While that may be a legitimate conjecture or speculation, the only thing that the reader is definitely told by the text is that angels in Heaven do not marry. These entities could very well possess distinctive gender. In such a case, these celestial beings could all be of the same gender. As such, in their realm there would be no one of the opposite sex with which to have a carnal relationship blessed in the eyes of God.

Even if angels did possess a system of two distinct genders analogous to that exhibited by human beings, their minds could be so focused on the presence of God directly there before them in Heaven that such beatific satisfaction might cause them to give the desire for bodily companionship little consideration. C.S. Lewis speculated

that what mere mortals think of as the pleasure and satisfaction found in the marital relationship in this world in the next might be like now comparing that of chocolate with sexuality. The youngster might be baffled how sex without chocolate can be fulfilling while the adult initiated into the delights of physical ecstasy is bemused by the child's delightful innocence.

In this postmodern era, the culture in general and the church in particular often grapples with finding an appropriate equilibrium for the rights of women in a world that has not always been respecting or accommodating of such. One of the most contentious debates to grip contemporary Christianity has surrounded the issue of headcoverings. The most ecumenical statement regarding such would be that there are sincere believers on both sides of this dispute. One side insists that, since God is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow, this injunction is as binding upon the believer of the early twenty-first century as it was the believer in the days of the Roman Empire and late antiquity. Those inclined towards a more expansionist interpretation would contend that the headcovering was more of a cultural application specific to that particular context that would manifest itself differently today. For example, the argument is made that a woman exposing her head in Paul's day was likely a prostitute. Translating that into today's fashion, it might be akin to a woman strutting into church with stiletto heels, fishnet stockings, a short skirt, and a tight blouse exposing a significant amount of cleavage. As such, what I Corinthians 11 is calling for is actually a generalized modesty of apparel or appearance.

Given the way men are in that the slightest visual stimulation can often nudge the mind in the directions of sensuality, one would assume that this kind of admonition

would be given for just this stated reason. For Jesus Himself admonished that, if a man lusts in his heart after a woman, he has already committed adultery with her. However, one of the primary reasons behind the church modesty directive recorded in this passage on headcoverings does not even seem to be taking the base nature of the human male all that much into account.

Interestingly, I Corinthians 11:10 reads, "For this reason, and because of the angels, the woman ought to have a sign of authority on her head." Why would angels need to be taken into consideration unless human women are particularly appealing to them? Those acculturated to an almost semi-ascetic approach to religion and spirituality that attempts to downplay the allure of pleasure will likely insist the concern expressed is that the angels might be negatively affected by catching a glimpse of a woman not appropriately submitting to an hierarchal chain of authority similar to the one to which these messengers of God must themselves obey. Pet owners are also supposed to walk their dogs of a leash. However, if the average man catches a glimpse of such a creature to which he otherwise has no carnal allure whatsoever strutting down the street without one of these accessories, he does not become so aroused as to endanger his immortal soul.

Functioning primarily in what might be referred to as "the heavenlies" or even in this world just out of the line of human perception, it is safe to conjecture that angels have a courtside seat on the fifty yard line to all of human triumph, tragedy, folly and tedium. Even Scripture seems to indicate that these entities play a role in observing humanity. For example, Hebrews 13:2 admonishes about entertaining angels unaware, indicating that as human beings in general and as Christians in particular that we might have been in

the presence of such celestial lifeforms and not even realized it. I Peter 1:12 alludes to the fact that angels themselves marvel at salvation. Therefore, as in the case of their human male counterparts, some might be particularly susceptible to the tempting allures associated with the female gender.

As Christians, the Bible stands as the final arbiter or standard by which truth is determined. Yet the God of revelation is also the God over all of the fields construed of as science in the broadest possible understanding of the term. As to whether or not angels and human beings can procreate together, canonical orthodox holy writ is not absolutely clear. The possibility of such, however, is addressed in other respected sources of antiquity.

Noah Hutchings of Southwest Radio Church Ministries references these in the chapter titled "Transhumanism: From Noah To Noah" published as part of the anthology *Pandemonium's Engine* (255-256). For example, in *The Antiquities Of The Jews*, the historian Josephus mentions that the giants were the result of angels intermingling with human women. Likewise, Philo of Alexandria shared a similar conclusion. Hutchings conveys one particular incident where the Emperor Hadrian boasted how with the power of Rome he conquered Jerusalem. The Rabbi Johanan ben Zakkai reminded him not to boast since it was the will of God that Rome was able to exert such might over the Chosen People. For when the Israelites were at their own zenith, with the assistance of the Almighty they had defeated far more formidable foes. The rabbi drove this admonition home by taking Hadrian into a cave believed to have contained the body of an Amorite measuring eighteen cubits or approximately thirty feet (Hutchings, 256).

In this chapter, the attempt has been made to address the

subject of whether there is a Christian or Biblical basis for intelligent life beyond the human as it is experienced here on Earth. It is the conclusion that, by definition, such would not be beyond the ability of God whose power is infinite and whose own limited creations --- though reflecting a degree of this intelligence --- are unable to comprehend His majesty fully. However, this consideration of the question of life beyond this world does raise a number of baffling perplexities relating in particular to the issue of incarnational Christology. Those disheartened by the prospects of a cosmos diminished by the likelihood that physical intelligent life might very well be limited to this one particular planet can find encouragement that there are indeed forms of intelligent life beyond the human that not only permeate dimensions other than the one our own species inhabits but that these beings have interacted with mankind for both its benefit and detriment as the great struggle takes place all around to rectify the scarring to the very fabric of reality caused by the intrusion of sin.

Chapter 7:
Eschatological Implications

The contention could be made that the admission that God divided the creation of intelligent ontology between the human and the angelic could be construed as a bit of a let down for those initially intrigued by the possibility of extraterrestrial life existing elsewhere within this physical universe and at some point interacting with the dominant species of this particular planet. Even if one adheres to the parameters of this analysis as an Evangelical appraisal of extraterrestrial spirituality more as an examination of the implications of the concept upon religious belief rather than solely as an investigation of the scientific evidence regarding the possibility of such, in today's climate the idea that angelic life might have interacted with mankind thousands of years ago as some hypothesize from passages found in an assortment of ancient texts does not exactly raise the excitement levels of many even if the liaisons between these orders of being were of a carnally scandalous nature.

It has been suggested that a significant percentage of Scripture is prophetic in nature. Theologians holding to a Dispensationalist or Futurist interpretation of these divine utterances would contend that a noticeable number of these are also yet to be fulfilled. As such, if the believer observes that these intelligences have operated parallel to human society and at pivotal points in humanity's timeline interacted with civilization, it is not unreasonable to conclude that something similar might occur again at some as of yet undetermined apocalyptic moment as the redemptive plan draws towards its climax. And as people contemporaneous to these events observe and participate in

the fulfillment of these prophecies, they could very well perceive them through the paradigm of an UFO or extraterrestrial encounter.

One of the foremost portions of Scripture for understanding the overall scope of history and the conclusion of the world order where man for the most part governs his own affairs with God orchestrating His plan through less observable means is the Book of Daniel. God's revelation on this topic in this text is conveyed through a series of visions either delivered to a Hebrew named Daniel living in captivity in Babylon or to someone with whom Daniel is brought into contact with such as Nebuchadnezzar. One such dream had by Nebuchadnezzar serving as a chronometric road map (and also later revealed to Daniel in a nocturnal mystical vision according to Daniel 2:19) consisted of a large statue of a man. The various segments of the statue's body were composed of a variety of metals or building materials that symbolically described the fundamental nature of an era's prevailing world empire. For example, the head was made of gold. In the interpretation of the vision, Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon was the head of gold, addressed by Daniel in Daniel 2:37 as the “king of kings” to whom God gave dominion over mankind and the animals.

The metals that followed were of decreasing value to denote that, while powerful, these kingdoms could not quite reach the grandeur of Babylon at that empire's zenith. Of these, the silver and bronze kingdoms, not much is detailed in this particular vision. Perhaps the most detailed aspects of this vision were reserved for the legs and feet.

The fourth kingdom, represented by the legs and feet, is described in Daniel 4:20 as being strong like iron. For as the text explains, “ --- for iron breaks and smashes

everything --- and as iron breaks things to pieces, so it will crush and break all the others." A number of eschatologists interpret that portion of the vision as being symbolic of the Roman Empire. For few geopolitical entities in the history of the world not only possessed that nation's aptitude for conquest but also exhibited the administrative genius to bring about the demise of its adversaries not only through military might but also through the extension of the benefits of its civilization to those willing to submit to its oversight in the formation of a synthesis incorporating aspects of both cultures into something new.

This strategy proved to be such a success that, though historians speak of Rome's demise, the particular mindset thought of as that civilization did not so much succumb to the same variety of end as the other empires epitomized by the other metals and anatomical segments of the statue detailed in the vision. A case could be made that what historians and scholars of the humanities refer to as Western civilization, composed of the nations of Europe and North America, was the ongoing successor of ancient Rome. That legacy was also modified and refined by a significant helping of Judeo-Christian ethical reflection and moral theology. Unfortunately, as pervasive secularist elites conspire to abandon the Biblical foundations, the pagan elements symptomatic to Rome and at times held in check by Christian influence have begun to reassert themselves. This trend will likely continue to the point that a number of theologians specializing in the study of the End Times speculate that, prior to Christ's return, some form of a revived Roman Empire will once again come to predominate global affairs.

Such an interpretative conjecture is drawn in part from this very prophetic vision of Nebuchadnezzar's statue.

Daniel 2:41-43 says, “Just as you saw that the feet and toes were partly of baked clay and partly of iron, so this will be a divided kingdom; yet it will have some of the strength of iron in it, even as you saw iron mixed with clay, As the toes were partly of iron and partly of clay, so this kingdom will be partly strong and partly brittle. And just as you saw the iron mixed with baked clay, so the people will be a mixture, and will not remain united, any more than iron mixed with clay.”

As previously stated, Western civilization is descended in part from the Roman Empire. Our culture does not necessarily manifest its every characteristic. Arno Froese of Midnight Call Ministries suggests in *How Democracy Will Elect The Antichrist* that the image of iron mixed with clay represents that this future geopolitical alignment will be administered along the lines of a dictatorship governed by or with concessions made to democracy (165). At one time, the ten toes were believed to be some combination of ten members of the European Community.

The iron represents the harsh nature of the future regime's rule while the clay represents the attempt to buttress the expression of such power with the kind of popular support those living in advanced and industrialized nations have come to perceive as the foundation upon which sociopolitical legitimacy rests. Such an interpretation is born out in light of other prophetic passages. In Daniel 7, this exiled Hebrew has yet another vision regarding the empires that would march across the stage of history from that point until the end of the age. But whereas Nebuchadnezzar's vision consisted of an idol composed of various metals, the vision conveyed to Daniel during the reign of Belshazzar consisted of an assortment of beasts markedly monstrous in their mystical appearances.

To Daniel, of the beasts he encountered in the dream, the most disturbing was no doubt the fourth. Of the fourth beast, Daniel 7:7 says, "After that, in my vision at night I looked, and there before me was a fourth beast --- terrifying and frightening and very powerful. It had large iron teeth; it crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left. It was different from all the former beasts, and it had ten horns." As unsettling as that image no doubt was, the destructive ferocity of such a creature was not even what could be described as its freakiest characteristic.

For as Daniel was contemplating the ten horns (possibly even being reminded of the ten toes of the earlier vision), he noticed another little horn which came among them according to Daniel 7:8. However, this extension of the head was more than an inanimate cranial appendage. According to Daniel 7:8, this horn was a lively thing with the eyes of a man and a mouth that spoke great things. In Revelation 6:2, depicted is a rider of a white horse of whom it is written, "It's rider held a bow, and he was given a crown, and he rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest." By comparing these passages, it would seem that this End Times empire will be driven largely by and focused around a charismatic leader's cult of personality. This leader is further described in Revelation 13:7-8 (where in the chapter he is described like a beast, bringing to mind the imagery of Daniel's vision) in the following manner: "And he was given authority over every tribe, people, language, and nation. All inhabitants of the world will worship the beast --- all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world."

Of the pending global system, Arno Froese writes in

Prophecy At Ground Zero: From Today's Mideast Madness To The Second Coming Of Christ, "Although the European Community functions relatively well, it is missing one vital element that is mentioned in the Bible: a leader. Daniel gave us details about this coming world leader who will be the decisive personality not only with the European Union but also worldwide. This man will lead the world's prosperity policy, subsequently fulfilling the Revelation 18:3 prophecy concerning merchants becoming rich (86)." During the early days of this regime, the world might seem to enter somewhat of a golden age. The masses will be content for a season to be ruled over with an iron hand (to invoke the metal itself mentioned in the divine revelation) in those areas where the planetary elites deem the individual insufficiently suited to decide for himself how his life will be run. Yet this tenuous utopia will last only a short while.

Among prophecy scholars, there is something of a consensus that things will worsen considerably around the midpoint of the prophesied seven year Tribulation Period. While many of these travails will come from on high from the hand of the Lord Himself, from the closing chapters of the Book of Daniel, the reader easily comes away with the impression that things will not remain peachy in terms of the geopolitical military situation. It is foretold in Daniel 11:40, "At the time of the end the king of the South will engage him in battle, and the king of the North will storm against him with chariots and calvary and a great fleet of ships."

Given that between these wars, the persecution of dissidents such as believers and the significant percentage of the population that will lose their lives as a result of the foretold judgments, it is understandable that Daniel 2:43 could be translated and interpreted to mean that culturally

mixed groups or even those of merely differing opinion would not remain united amidst such apocalyptic turmoil. For even in the best of times, close-knit families and loving couples can get into heated disputes over something as mundane as what to watch on television or where to go out to eat. So it is highly doubtful that people are going to be getting along all that well when much of the water supply is turned to blood and a loaf of bread costs a day's wage.

However, from the translation of the text in the King James, the reader can come to an interpretation that there might be a development transpiring at that particular point in the prophetic time line beyond the calamity of a deteriorating geopolitical situation. Daniel 2:43 in the King James Version reads, "And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay." Speculative theologian Tom Horn considered the implications of this verse in a paper submitted to the American Academy of Religion titled "Transhumanism and Religion" republished at Horn's ministry website RaidersNewsUpdate.

Horn hypothesizes that the phraseology of the King James translation predicts that events similar to those described in Genesis 6 will once again take place on a significant scale. Tom Horn writes, "Some believe that the corruption of antediluvian DNA by Watchers (the angelic beings described as the sons of God in the Biblical text) was an effort to cut off the birth line of the Messiah. This theory posits that Satan understood the protoevangelion --- the promise in Genesis 3:15 that a Savior would be born to the seed of the woman, and that He would destroy the fallen angel's power." Despite this being the foremost motive behind this theory, Horn postulates an additional reason by

comparing what was revealed through the Word of God with other complimentary sources that (though not inspired in the same sense as divine revelation) were still no doubt esteemed especially among the ancients of Judaism.

Horn continues, "To harmonize the ancient records, I came to believe...that the overriding motive for whatever the Watchers were doing with the DNA of various species had to be understood within the context of their foremost good, which was to leave their plane of existence and to enter ours." Horn believes that the occultic endgame of cross species genetic engineering, even if it is not realized by the materialists conducting such research, is to prepare a souless form of biomatter into which these intelligences can download themselves for the purposes of serving an an organic, ambulatory extension into this physical reality. Therefore, it would be that this attempt to meld human and angelic life that is prophesied to disintegrate will serve as a symbol of the corrodible foundation upon which the New World Order and the regime of the Antichrist will rest.

Though Tom Horn has many students and admirers in that arena where interest in Christian eschatology, surivialism and paranormal research overlap, a source even more credible hints as to the possibility of a parallel between the time when the world was destroyed by water and the time when it will be consumed by fire. Jesus Himself counseled in Matthew 24:37-39, "As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man."

A number will interpret that passage to mean little more

than that, at the time of Christ's Second Coming or at least the Rapture, life will simply be transpiring pretty much as it always has for centuries and even millennia. But if the generation extant at that moment in history has done nothing more than the generations that proceeded it, than why judgment far exceeding anything God sent previously as punishment for sin? For it says in Matthew 24:21-22 of this time of Tribulation that there will be none other like it and that, if the days were not shortened for the sake of the elect, no flesh would be spared.

The apocalyptic imagery and symbolism detailed in the pages of the Bible are of such a spectacularly terrifying nature that they even surpass that of the imaginary beings depicted in the narratives of speculative fiction. An academic analysis examining just how many of these were in turn derived from Scriptural inspiration could itself be a productive path to pursue in terms of sustained scholarship. However, in keeping the topic limited to the parameters of this current study, the postulation will be asserted that the extraterrestrial hypothesis will be utilized to explain these prophetic events by those refusing to accept the Christian explanation and to deceive those failing to discern this truth for a variety of reasons.

In terms of stability, the average person not subjected to a process of considerable manipulation is usually reluctant to abandon previously held beliefs and convictions in favor of a comprehensively different conceptions of reality. Despite constant exposure to stories about extraterrestrials and institutions in authority subtly laying a framework for the acceptance of beings claiming a point of origin beyond this world, most in the developed world (at least at the time of this writing) are blessed with a level of material security and comfort to the point where speculation regarding this

topic is little more than an engaging momentary curiosity or way to experience a passing sense of metaphysical profundity. However, that conceptual awareness carefully cultivated just below the level of embraced consciousness could be triggered through just the right circumstances or series of events.

Eschatologist William James writes in *Prophecy At Ground Zero: From Today's Mideast Madness To The Second Coming Of Christ*, "The Bible foretells of a phenomenal event that will have a far greater impact on Christians and non-Christians alike than any happening that has occurred since Jesus' crucifixion, burial and resurrection (201)." James is referring to an event known as the Rapture, which he defines as Christ snatching the Church from the Earth to be with Him. In essence, the Rapture is the moment when Christians --- both the living and the bodies of the departed laid to rest --- will rise to meet Christ in the air. The basis for this belief is found in I Thessalonians 4:16-18. That particular text reads, "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord." This text is complimentary to I Corinthians 15:51-52. The passage reads, "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

Believers that do not agree with Dispentationalism's chronology will counter that what is described in these passages is simply the Resurrection that will occur at

Christ's triumphant Second Coming at the conclusion of history. These verses are detailing the same events mentioned in Revelation 20:4-6. The passage reads, "...And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God...They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended). This is the first resurrection." Therefore, what is being taught in the totality of Scripture is that, at the time of the Second Coming, all who have believed at that glorious moment will either be resurrected or experience transfiguring renewal in the twinkling of an eye.

Adherents of a position categorized as Pretribulationalism caution against such hasty conclusions. These theologians would suggest that such passages are not necessarily describing the same event. For whereas the Second Coming is categorized as an event that the world will not be able to ignore, there are also passages indicating that part of this coming will be unexpected and secretive.

I Thessalonians 5:2-3 counsels, "for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying 'Peace and safety', destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape." From this passage, the student of Scripture gets the impression that, at the time of the Lord's appearing, the world will be somewhat in a state of tranquility. However, the world is anything but at the time of the Glorious Appearing detailed in the Book of Revelation.

For example, at that point in history in the span of a few short years significant percentages of the world's population will have died in a series of unprecedented calamities.

According to Revelation 16:16, the kings of the Earth will gather at Armageddon where they think they will be assembling to make war upon one another or to finally obliterate God's Chosen People from the face of the planet just as Israel emerges from centuries of deliberate unbelief. The astute Bible scholar will note that Revelation 16:15 reads, "Behold, I come like a thief. Blessed is he who stays awake and keeps his clothes with him, so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed." That text is noticeably similar to I Thessalonians 5:2.

Certain interpretations seeking as their objective a synthesizing harmony would understand these passages to mean that, while the return of the Messiah could very well be on the minds of the remaining few still awaiting the Blessed Hope at that time, the attention of the world will be distracted by what many would consider more pressing concerns. Such an interpretation, though within the bounds of Scriptural fidelity, still at points does not seem optimal in formulating an eschatological chronology most comprehensive in adhering to the totality of prophetic revelation. For it fails to incorporate into the hypothesized scenario a number of important details.

The foremost one of these is provided in Matthew 24:36 when Christ Himself proclaims, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." However, if Christ did not appear at all until the end of the Tribulation period, it would not take a Dallas Seminary theologian to predict a fairly accurate date for this event. That is because, according to Daniel 9:27, this span of time is believed to last approximately seven years and will commence with a covenant or peace treaty between the Antichrist and the nation of Israel. Coupled with the increasing ferocity of the judgments coming upon the Earth

at that time as described throughout the Book of Revelation, it would not be difficult to look back to what would have no doubt been the conclusion of a prominent Middle Eastern peace summit and simply calculate seven years from that particular date to arrive at the likely return of Christ.

Prophecy expert Tim LaHaye clarifies in *The Beginning Of The End*, "The only way to correlate these teachings regarding Christ's coming is to understand his coming is in two stages. The first stage is the Rapture, or the taking away of the Church; the second is the Glorious Appearing to the whole earth (21)." LaHaye continues in the next paragraph, "The coming of the blessed Lord is to be a two-stage event, and it is separated by a seven-year interval (21)." Christ's words alone can be taken as evidence enough to justify belief for a possible two-staged approach to the Second Advent. However, there are other deductions leading to similar conclusions that can be drawn from additional Scriptural passages. Interestingly, at least one of these focuses more upon the work of the Holy Spirit rather than directly upon Jesus Christ.

In II Thessalonians, Paul expounds upon prophecies regarding the foretold lawless one commonly referred to as the Antichrist. From this epistle, the student of Scripture is conveyed the impression that the Thessalonians had become so unsettled by these teachings in light of the tumultuous Greco-Roman world in which they lived that the Apostle wanted to give this body of believers a degree of comfort regarding the things that were to come. Paul writes in II Thessalonians 2:6-8, "And now you know that what is holding him [the man of lawlessness] back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time. For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way.

And then the lawless one will be revealed."

It is believed that this "Great Restrainer" is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is nothing less than the person of the Godhead that indwells the heart of every sincerely professing Christian. I Corinthians 6:19 says, "Do you know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you whom you have received from God?" The Holy Spirit also reproves the world of sin, righteousness and judgment according to John 6:8.

The passages result in a kind of quandary that would need to be addressed. Foremostly, it is stated that the man of lawlessness cannot be revealed until this mentioned restrainer is taken out of the world for at least a brief amount of time. However, the Holy Spirit is in the world so long as there is at least a remnant that profess Jesus Christ as Lord. Therefore, for the Beast to be revealed in an eschatological chronology without a pre-Tribulational Rapture, the presence of God would have to be taken from those professed to be His children. However, one of the most precious promises in all of Scripture is that He will never leave us nor forsake us.

For both of these Biblical certainties to be met of the Restrainer being removed from the world with the Holy Spirit remaining the indwelling Comforter for all who call upon the name of the Lord, the church would likely need to be removed from the world along with the Holy Spirit. Even if the average believer is not all that keen at this particular event occurring at this exact moment, the prospect of such an event in the indeterminate future in which one will behold Christ in direct tangibility for the first time while being reunited with loved ones already having passed in Christ does fill the believer with a measure of anticipatory joy. However, it will no doubt be a time of

overwhelming terror for those, as Tim LaHaye titled his novelization of these events, left behind. In the chapter pertaining to the Rapture in the anthology titled *Prophecy At Ground Zero*, Hal Lindsey (himself the author of the seminal *The Late Great Planet Earth*) is quoted as saying, "If God is going to remove His ambassadors, you can expect there will be repercussions that will shake people up and...when every living believer is snatched out, there's going to be planes crashing; there's going to be all kinds of weird things happening because God wants...to...let them know that something supernatural has intervened (James, 203)."

The world at this point, especially in the advanced civilized areas, is dependent upon systems and technologies unable to function and that begin to break down without the regularity of attentive human oversight. In His own direct words regarding the time of His return drawing near, Jesus says in Matthew 24:40-41, "Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left." From Hal Lindsey's quote and more importantly from Christ's own words, there will indeed be a trumpet that sounds, but God will not be waiting for the workday to end and everyone off the streets in a tidy fashion before commencing the next event on the prophetic itinerary. If the sudden disappearance of farmhands and grist maidens is shocking, just imagine the result of dangerous equipment left unattended such as a jetliner or even a nuclear power plant that might loose key personnel during this event.

Between a noticeable percentage of the population having disappeared, millions of graves emptied (perhaps even cremation urns as well), and assorted disasters likely to ensue as a result of the misery, panic will undoubtedly

erupt. As well as wanting order restored, the remaining will demand answers to ease their terrified minds and comfort their aching hearts. Chesterton is credited with saying that the problem when people do not believe in a traditional understanding of God is not that they will not believe in anything but that they will believe in anything. In the moments and short while following the widespread disappearances, there will be no Christians remaining in the world to provide balanced counsel regarding what a shocked and grieving world has just witnessed. And with the Holy Spirit no longer operating to the extent that He once did in terms of restraining evil, the unregenerate masses will be grasping for any explanation other than the one urging them to call upon the name of the Lord and be saved.

In a world that has just experienced the implausibility of millions instantaneously vanishing without a trace, the notion of UFO's and extraterrestrials intervening in human affairs might no longer sound as outlandish or even as psychotic as it did just that same time the previous week. Peter and Paul Lalonde write in *2000 AD (Are You Ready?)*, "If the rapture had happened one hundred years ago, there would have been absolutely no context within which those who were left behind would be able to make sense of what had happened (55)." With that volume titled with a date sounding increasingly historical rather than distinctively futuristic, the Evangelical scholar cannot help but almost cringe in reflecting upon the litany of deluded date-setters errant regarding their particular predictions as to when the world would end. Harold Camping's own warnings and theatrics regarding 2011 rank among the most recent to come to mind. However, with the analysis of the Brothers Lalonde, it is difficult to find fault.

As suggested throughout the preceding chapters of this particular examination, the Lalonde's suggest that the fantastic science fiction narratives most have been subjected to throughout their entire lives will provide those left behind with enough of an explanation that will assist them in denying the truth that will be staring them in the face. And as a result of their failure to be critical, these souls will succumb to the delusion eager to ensnare them throughout all of eternity. The Lalonde's further elaborate, "The transporter beam gives the world a context for people disappearing right before their very eyes. It means that when the rapture takes place, the first thing that will come to mind is Star Trek's transporter beam... Just think of all the possibilities that this *Star Trek* context will make available to the Antichrist...who has to begin by explaining something as incredible and unprecedented as the rapture (56)."

Following the initial uproar and socioeconomic dislocation, those stepping forward to claim responsibility for this event might even be able to persuade a significant percentage of the population that the widespread disappearances were in no way intended to be perceived as malicious. The Lalonde's continue, "The first thing he [meaning the Antichrist] could tell the ones remaining is that the Christians had been holding the rest of the planet back. He could tell them that they are ready for the next step...of human evolution, and now, with the Christians out of the way, there is nothing to stop them from discovering their destiny. Ours is a generation that would eat that up (56)." At first, the Son of Perdition and the forces of darkness that he represents might even be thanked for it.

Daniel 8:25 reveals that, for a time under the Antichrist, he will cause craft (likely meaning business and commerce)

to prosper. However, as his regime continues, it will become apparent that this prosperity is false and the security that this leader has promised will not endure. Revelation 6:5-6 says, “And when he [the Lamb] had opened the third seal...I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, 'A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barely for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine'.” A number of experts on the End Times calculate that to mean a single loaf of bread will likely cost nearly a day's wage (for those fortunate to find such a simple provision). Revelation 13:7 warns that the Antichrist will make war upon the saints coming to faith in Christ during the Tribulation, executing many for failing to take his mark or to worship his image. Before all is said and done, fear of disappearing as an accused dissenter could eventually become as pervasive as the fear of the Great Disappearance that ushered this regime into power.

The twentieth century was no doubt impacted by figures that could be characterized as the rock stars of dictatorship and tyranny. These regimes were not ruled through fear and violence alone. A number of them such as Hitler, Stalin, and Mao were able to imbue their respective dictatorships with a messianic aura crossing the line into the cultic. With such being a profound historic memory of contemporary significance, it is easy for those within the church to conceptualize of the Antichrist in the mold of those that stood in for him during these blood-soaked dress rehearsals while Satan worked out the kinks for his last-ditch attempt to seize ultimate power. As such, it can be easy to overlook the prominent and open displays of supernatural power that will manifest at this time in the future under consideration.

From the scenario postulated by the Lalondes, one might get the impression that the Antichrist will claim to possess a technology capable of eliminating those standing in the way of human progress. Bob Larson in *UFO's & The Alien Agenda* proposes a slightly different scenario. He suggests, "What if the Antichrist, or his precursors, were to suggest that benevolent beings from beyond had actually done those remaining on Earth a favor, by mass abduction of Bible believers (206)?" Larson continues, "Consider this scenario. After decades of conditioning, a UFO actually lands and begins to disembark...They claim to be superior beings...However, they offer to come in peace if humanity will accept their ideas of spirituality, which promise to save the Earth from impending doom (208)."

The theatrics of the Antichrist and the spirit beings in league with him will be overwhelmingly convincing. II Thessalonians 2:9-11 warns, "The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the works of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs, and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perished because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so they will believe the lie." Jesus Himself expanded upon a similar theme in Matthew 24:24 when He warned, "For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive the elect --- if that were possible." That means that these deceptions will be so convincing that, to our own mere human perceptions, they will likely seem quite tangible and real.

As an embodied creature, the most skeptical among the human species can often withstand the most powerful claims if these ideas remain at the level of abstraction or conceptualization. For example, in John 20:24-29, Thomas

held out on believing Jesus had risen from the dead until allowed to inspect the wounds of the Crucifixion for himself. However, upon being presented with such physical proof, Thomas knelt before Jesus as his Lord and his God.

Given this aspect of human nature, it is not out of the realm of possibility that these strong delusions could very well take on corporeal form beyond that of the Antichrist and False Prophet. As elaborated in previous chapters, there are already those that claim not only to have encountered intelligent beings from beyond Earth but also experimented upon by these entities and taken advantage of for the purposes of reproduction and genetic hybridization. Such a claim is now considered beyond the realm of possibility to the point of being laughable. However, given that no one alive today has experience in a world where the restraining power of the Holy Spirit has been withheld, one cannot make definitive statements regarding what manner of abominations will be allowed to saunter forth across the face of the world absent of such restraining righteousness. Revelation 16:13-14 reads, "Then I saw three evil spirits that looked like frogs; they came from the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. They are spirits of demons performing miraculous signs, and they go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them for the battle of the great day of God Almighty."

That passage is worthy of careful consideration in relation to this analysis. In the hearing of the text, it is easy to think in the imagination of a creature not unlike Kermit from the Muppets or of an amphibian that one is likely to see down at the local pond. However, the student of Scripture would do well to note that the passage reads, "evil spirits that looked like frogs". That means that, while

resembling a frog, that these beings might not have looked exactly like a frog in terms of one to one correspondence. At this point, the unsuspecting might wonder why go out of one's way to be so grammatically particular? The perplexed might realize why when they stop to consider the appearance of the stereotypical extraterrestrial.

Interestingly, not all alleged aliens look alike. If these reports are to be taken at face value, there are a number of highly divergent varieties. One such species is referred to as the "Nordics". Eyewitnesses often describe these as strikingly tall and beautiful with long blond hair, blue eyes, and pale skin (Larson, 134). From these details, the Christian cannot help but think of II Corinthians 11:14 that warns how Satan masquerades as an angel of light.

Irrespective of that for whatever reason, a number of his minions seem to prefer a visual form that might be less appealing to human physical aesthetics but which has become no less iconic. Bob Larson writes in *UFO's & The Alien Agenda*, "The Grays are the most commonly reported...aliens of today. They have protracted oval eyes, long thin arms and legs, and slits for noses and mouths. The name comes from the color of their skin...Grays are also described as having a large, wide mouth without teeth (135)." Examples of Grays from popular culture include Roger from *American Dad* and Thor of the Asgard on *Stargate: SG1*. Interestingly, though not Nordic in appearance as one might suspect, the Grays on *Stargate* did assume the identities of the deities in that particular pantheon in this dramatic adaptation of the Van Daniken chariots of the gods hypothesis.

Upon reflection, it could be observed how the Grays could come across as frog-like in appearance. Both could be described as hairless. Both frogs and Grays have large,

prominent and often protruding bulbous eyes. Both frogs and Grays possess limbs that look long and gangling in comparison to the overall size of their respective bodies. Both frogs and Grays look as if they would feel slimy to the touch.

But even more important than the appearances of these beings is the diabolical mission that they set out upon. Revelation 16:14 elaborates of them, "They are spirits of demons performing miraculous signs, and they go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them for the battle on the great day of God Almighty." From this text, one learns that their purpose is one of persuasion and is almost evangelistic in that they are to rally world leaders in particular in what will amount to a war effort against God Himself at Armageddon.

Often Satan and his henchmen are subtle in the tools they employ to lead people astray. Often as little as a word might direct an individual towards a path that the unsuspecting might not initially realize that they are being led down. However, from that passage, one could easily imagine these beings ascending the podium at the U.N. General Assembly to plead their case to the delegates. The Antichrist and the False Prophet might even be there with them, slightly off to the side supportively as a gesture of interspecies cooperation. In terms of the foretold miraculous signs, perhaps what these beings claim is their spaceship could be parked hovering in a stationary position over U.N. Plaza or even large enough to cover all of New York City. A scene not all that dissimilar was depicted in the remake of the series *V* where the Visitors approached humanity claiming the best of intentions only to be eventually exposed for harboring far more sinister motives.

Entities fitting this description have become quite

practiced at the kind off message that they will propagate before the world during the climactic days of the End Times by plying it for a while now to smaller scale audiences. As mentioned previously in passing, it is quite curious that beings claiming to have traveled light years across the cosmos make such a journey largely for the purposes of correcting the notion, faulty in their perspective, that Jesus is the only begotten divine Son of God and to replace that notion with one that He is merely another created being advanced along the path of enlightenment and evolution. Bob Larson writes in *UFO's & The Alien Agenda*, "In UFO cults, the problems of humanity are never attributed to a sinful nature...Instead, the true predicament of humanity is said to be a lack of spiritual evolution (191)." Larson goes on to further observe, "The message of these advanced, compassionate extraterrestrials is curiously devoid of any objective moral criteria. Our space brothers are beyond that. Instead, alien influenced leaders ask us to shed most inhibitions. Doing so...allows cult members to tap into an universal intelligence that is beyond do's and don'ts (Larson, 192)." Just imagine how much more powerful this temptation will be when presented to all of humanity nearly all at the same time, with repercussions in the form of social ostracism to the point of comprehensive economic boycott for those failing to comply.

The contemporary world seeks many of the answers to some of the most profound questions through science. Yet many are unable to shake the appeal of the spiritual even if they have developed a distaste for traditional conceptions of God. As such, it is only natural that many would attempt to understand End Times events unfolding around them in terms of extraterrestrial phenomena. Amplifying this tendency will be the fact that many of these events, signs,

and wonders will take place or originate in the sky above the Earth from the perspective of those observing such.

If the dispensationalist or at least pretribulationalist interpretation of eschatology is proven correct, the first of these events that would likely set the stage for the normalization of supernatural intervention into this realm in the contemporary era resulting in objective and quantifiable manifestations would no doubt be the Rapture. Since it is believed that this occurrence will take place in the twinkling of an eye according to I Corinthians 15:52, those not participating directly will likely not witness the kinetics of this metaphysical transformation. It will not be until moments afterwards that most will realize that something of paradigm shifting implications has transpired. Interestingly though, I Thessalonians 4:17 talks of this experience as being caught up into the air to meet the Lord Jesus Christ. From that point forward, the world will have many things to look to from the skies as the Day of the Lord unfolds.

As the present age draws towards its conclusion, both the forces of good and evil will display their respective forms of power. In the baseness that Satan has given himself over to, the Old Deluder is not much more than a cheap imitator even if his parlor tricks are enough to overwhelm mere human beings relying upon their own reason and ability. It is only natural to conclude that, given God's own opening demonstration in what could be considered the commencing scene of history's closing act ending in Christ's return to establish His kingdom, Satan would also utilize the skies to orchestrate one of the deceptions for which he is infamous.

The expanse above us is, after all, Satan's particular stronghold and base of operations. Ephesians 2:2 refers to him as "...the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." Such is

more than a lofty ceremonial title bestowed merely for the purposes of instilling fear or intimidation. Revelation 13:13 says of the False Prophet (the Antichrist's primary religious and administrative functionary), "As he performed great and miraculous signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven in full view of men."

The one thing that can be said definitively of that verse in Revelation 13 is that the False prophet will call fire down from the sky as a demonstration of the malevolent spiritual power that he has tapped into and is in league with. Interpreting that verse through the imagery of the extraterrestrial hypothesis is just as valid as any theory as to how this event might appear to and be understood by the onlookers likely to be deceived by the act. For example, this fire could be rained down upon the Earth from what might be perceived as a flying saucer or any other shape of craft these beings might pretend to travel around in for the sake of global manipulation.

As the appointed revelator, John's holy mission on Patmos was to convey to the Christians of his era firstly and then to all believers following after throughout church history a description of images of things as of then yet to transpire. Given the rate of change even between the early twentieth century and the early twenty-first century, it is a reasonable speculation that the apostle might have seen things that had not yet been invented. Interestingly, the fire coming down from heaven might appear to those either observing it or even to the victims of it as the discharge of a laser or particle beam weapon. Such an energy emission could easily incinerate its targets. Furthermore, in popular culture such as *Star Wars* and *Star Trek*, spaceships of a wide variety have always been depicted as utilizing lasers (or "phasers" as these technologies have been termed in

Star Trek) as the primary means of attack and defense utilized by such vehicles.

Though Satan and those in league with him will be the ones utilizing the skies during the End Times for the purposes of deception, he will not be the only party employing the expanse overhead for the purposes of gaining the attention of mankind. For God will use His creation there for the purposes of both imposing judgment and as part of the last evangelistic campaign to remind those upon the Earth that the time of His offer of salvation through belief in Jesus Christ is running short and will soon draw to a close. For example, during the assorted judgments foretold and described in the Book of Revelation, a number sound as if they come from outer space.

The first of these seems to be found in the sixth seal judgment. When this is opened by Christ, Revelation 6:12-14 reveals, "There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black..., the whole moon turned red, and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as late figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind. The sky receded like a scroll rolling up, and every mountain and island were removed out of their places." From the text, the reader learns that the particular judgment in question not only involves the earth below in terms of a quake powerful enough that the entire planet is tectonically shifted as indicated by the phrase about every mountain and island being moved. For the sky itself is also involved. In regards to the sun turning black and the moon to blood red, it could be conjectured that the predicted quake is so powerful that plumes of debris could be tossed into the atmosphere resulting in a variety of optical distortions such as those that would likely manifest during a so-called "nuclear winter".

The first clause prompting the reader to conclude that this

prophecy is to involve an event beyond that of an earthquake is the one warning that the stars in the sky will fall to Earth like figs shaken from a tree. With the advances in astronomical knowledge enjoyed in this technologically advanced era, one does not have to be Carl Sagan or Stephen Hawking to realize that the text might not be referring to stars in the sense that these objects are understood today as the orbs of superheated nuclear energy around which solar systems orbit. Rather, these are most likely a reference to asteroids or meteors. Even today when such interplanetary detritus burns up in the atmosphere, these objects are referred to as “falling stars”.

Normally, when these objects collide with the Earth's protective atmosphere, the resultant friction disintegrates the unintended intruder before any damage is done. However, from time to time, these bodies are of sufficient girth and heft that enough of the original mass survives the entry into the atmosphere that impact is made. Those tending towards an evolutionary explanation of origins theory contend that an asteroid impacting near the Yucatan Peninsula may have been responsible for the extinction of the dinosaurs. It is hypothesized that the sauropods were unable to adapt to the resultant climactic alterations.

If in considering this phenomena of planetary collision and bombardment one prefers examples a bit more of an historically verifiable nature, there are indeed such incidents available for consideration. For example, in 1908 in the Siberian region of Tunguska, either an asteroid or even a comet is believed to have collided with the Earth. Trees were toppled and the ground scorched miles from the impact site. A number of conspiracy theorists even contend that this damage was instead caused by an UFO crash. More recently and though with considerably less damage, a

few short years ago Russia was pelted with what could be categorized as a light meteor shower that did do documented damage to a number of buildings. Though this was not an extinction level event or even a natural disaster like the Tunguska Incident, news coverage of that astronomical disturbance does provide the student of eschatology a baseline of facts and images from which to extrapolate the feasibility of a catastrophe involving these variables on a much more destructive scale.

Those reluctant to accept what the prophetic portions of Scripture are foretelling the reader will attempt to downplay this warning by dismissing the imagery as a symbolic metaphor attesting to the power of God or a related spiritual truth. However, this is not the only passage dealing with destruction resulting from debris falling from the sky. In Revelation 8 alone, the planet is struck at least two more times in what are referred to as the Trumpet Judgments. Revelation 8:8-9 describes the second trumpet judgment as, "...and something like a huge mountain, all ablaze, was throne into the sea. A third of the sea turned to blood, a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed."

This is even more descriptive than the previous assault against the Earth. For this object is not referred to in a somewhat vague manner with the term "stars". Rather, this is described as "like a mountain, all ablaze." To the eye of the scientific layman, many meteors or asteroids resemble very large rocks and often mountains look like the rocks of which they are composed. It can be reemphasized that, to someone from the ancient world, one of these astronomical objects careening towards an impact with this planet might very well look like a mountain on fire as it became superheated against the friction of the atmosphere.

Those mired in skepticism either stemming from outright unbelief or in preference of an interpretation comforting them that there will be nothing but smooth sailing from now until Christ finally decides to return might still be reluctant to accept the upsetting notion that the world is scheduled to suffer catastrophe inflicted from outer space. But as soon as Revelation describes that second onslaught coming from above, the planet is similarly struck for a third time. Revelation 8:10-11 says, "The third angel sounded his trumpet and a great star, blazing like a torch, fell from the sky and on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water --- the name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters turned bitter, and many people died from the waters that had become bitter."

It could be argued that the global impact of this particular Trumpet Judgment is of an even greater significance because it is given its own name. For whereas the previous collision with the sea causes loss of life no doubt of those afloat at the time of the event and no doubt devastates the seafood industry with the death of a third of all marine life, Wormwood will contaminate thirty three percent of the global supply of freshwater. This poisoning will no doubt lead to death tolls likely in the millions.

Even if these descriptions that sound like impact events from the perspective of contemporary science are not that at all, these passages still legitimately inspire the student of the End Times to conclude that our planet will one day be visited by powerful beings from beyond this world. Revelation 9:1-3 reads, "The fifth angel sounded his trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen from the sky to earth. The star was given the key to the shaft of the Abyss. When he opened the Abyss, smoke rose from it like the smoke of a gigantic furnace. The sun and the sky were

darkened by the smoke from the Abyss. And out of the smoke locusts came down upon the earth and were given power like that of scorpions upon the earth." There is much to consider in that passage.

Firstly, the prophetic interpreter is within the bounds of propriety to suggest that the star referred to in this instance is likely an angelic being. For unlike those references to stars with characteristics sounding like those of astronomical objects, this one behaves in a manner more typical of a deliberative life form. For example, "he" not "it" is given a key with which he proceeds to open the Abyss. That act itself will unleash upon the Earth creatures that, if not from another world, are possessed of a countenance unlike anything that the world has ever seen.

According to Revelation 9:4-5, the mission of these potentially interdimensional creatures is to torture for five months those that did not have the seal of God on their foreheads. These creatures will be allowed to torture but not kill, leading to a situation sounding reminiscent of a zombie apocalypse where the victimized will try to seek death but will discover that they cannot find it. Of the appearance of such hellspawn, Revelation 9:8-10 says that their faces looked like that of a human being with hair like a woman's, teeth like that of a lion, thunderous wings, and the tail of a scorpion.

As in the case of the numerous astronomical bodies striking the Earth in quick succession, this demonic interdiction will be quickly followed by another. Revelation 9:13-15 reads, "The sixth angel sounded his trumpet, and I heard a voice coming from the horns of the Golden altar that is before God. It said to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, 'Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.' And the four angels

who had been kept ready for this very hour and day and month and year were released to kill a third of mankind." From Revelation 9:16-18, the impression is given that these angelic entities are themselves leading an army of two hundred million mounted troops with the mission of inflicting wide scale death and destruction.

Due to the number of this army surpassing in total the entire populations of a number of small nations, eschatologists have often speculated that this prophecy might be a reference to an expansionist and belligerent China. However, the description of the mounts surpasses even the horror of the previously mentioned locusts. Revelation 9:17-19 describes the heads of the horses as resembling a lion with fire, smoke, and sulfur spewing from their mouths; and their tails were like snakes whose heads inflict injury. From that description, the imperial walkers from the Battle of Hoth in "Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back" come easily to mind.

The fierce countenance of these marauders is not the only aspect of that passage prompting speculation. The curiosity of the observant Bible student is also no doubt piqued by the identity of the four paroled angels and the terms of their incarceration. Though it would for the most part be conjecture, a number of expositors and commentators such as Tom Horn, Michael Heiser, and Lynn Marzuli have wondered if these entities now detained somehow in the Euphrates awaiting release might be the same referenced in the Epistle of Jude. The text referencing such in verse six reads, "And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home --- these he has kept in darkness bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great day."

Theologians such as those just mentioned hypothesize

that the angelic beings referenced in the Epistle of Jude were singled out for a punishment to a degree harsher than their compatriots cast out of Heaven as part of Satan's initial rebellion because of certain transgressions alluded to in Genesis 6. As examined previously, some interpret Genesis 6:2-4 to mean certain angels intermarried with human women to produce a hybrid race known as the Nephilim. It is argued that this was the final straw of man's deepening depravity that tipped the scales of judgment prompting God to begin somewhat anew with the last remaining patriarch and his family that had not polluted themselves with this particular form of contamination. Given the monstrous description of these mounted troops coupled with the havoc these particular foul spirits may seemingly play at both bookends of history, it must be asked could this foretold invasion force poised to shed blood around the globe be the result of genetic experimentation and tinkering at the behest of this apocalyptic quartet?

The simple question of whether or not the Bible mentions what could be considered extraterrestrial life is one that requires a nuanced answer. The most basic reply is that the sacred text does not mention extraterrestrial life if what is meant by that consists of creatures and beings like ourselves residing on a particular planet. However, there are certainly intelligences that are created like our own that would have few qualms about manipulating perceptions and events in order to present themselves as extraterrestrials in the popular understanding of that terminology in order to deceive as many as possible so that souls might never come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Conclusion

At least from a rhetorical perspective, it can be said that this consideration of extraterrestrial life from an Evangelical Christian perspective, much like the vehicle known as the TARDIS piloted by beloved British science fiction character Doctor Who, has spanned nearly all of time and space. This analysis began by taking into consideration a number of incidents considered as pivotal to a secular understanding of the field that has come to be known as ufology. From these encounters such as that of Ken Arnold's from which the etymology of the term "flying saucer" is derived and the scrambling of fighter jets over the course of multiple days over the nation's capital, it has been proven that one does not have to be psychologically imbalanced to attest to the existence of this phenomena. In fact, those having had such experiences such as pilots and aeronautical support personnel would have not only been trained in highly technical fields such as science and engineering but would have also have to have been in exceptional mental and physical health as well.

It would also be easy and even to an extent rational to suspect that those claiming to have encountered what they believe to be extraterrestrials are doing so for the purposes of attention and notoriety. However, these individuals often confess to having experienced profound personal trauma up to and including violations of their bodies equivalent to rape and experimental medical procedures without consent. Some even believe that children conceived as a result have been taken from them. Such souls endure a grief similar to that as if they had lost an actual child. Despite popular perception, confessing to these sorts of traumas and violations has not proven itself to be a reliable path to

success or even occupational fulfillment. The movie franchise *Men In Black* is in fact inspired by the nondescript individuals claiming to be from the government that often imply violence against witnesses if they do not comply with orders to remain silent regarding what they have seen or experienced.

From the way the human psyche is configured, extraterrestrials do not necessarily have to exist in order to exert profound influence over both groups and individuals. This has been accomplished through the power of belief. It may come as a surprise to most Americans simply trying to live an everyday existence, but the belief in life beyond this planet plays an increasing role in contemporary spirituality.

For example, the Raelian movement was founded by a French-Canadian race car driver who claimed that human beings were genetically engineered by a race of extraterrestrials known as the Elohim. The sect also believes that, as humanity advances, our species will also develop biological technologies seemingly as godlike in the eyes of the less-developed scientifically. This enthusiasm has led to a number of headlines and scandals surrounding corporations specializing in cloning linked to the sect. Emphasizing a fundamentally materialistic worldview, Raelians are noted for being quite open (some might say even licentious) in regards to matters of the body and sexuality.

At the other end of the spectrum was to be found the sect that came to be known as Heaven's Gate. Whereas the Raelians wallow in carnality, Heaven's Gate implemented about the harshest measures imaginable to mortify the flesh. First, a number of the sect's adherents had themselves castrated in order to free themselves from what they perceived as the evils of sexual desire. The ultimate goal of

these space-age gnostics was to free themselves of their bodies which they viewed as little more than filthy containers to be discarded before moving on to the next level of existence. Marshall Applewhite put this belief into practice in 1997 as the Hale-Bopp comet approached the Earth as it made its way through the solar system. By killing themselves, members of the group believed they would be taken aboard a spacecraft trailing behind that orbiting wad of ice.

Not all religions that incorporate unidentified flying objects or even extraterrestrials into their belief systems are as explicit about it. For example, though primarily known as a group drawing upon Islam interpreted from an Afrosupremacist perspective, UFO's play a prominent role in the eschatology of the Nation of Islam. The sect contends that one such vehicle, referred to as the Mother Wheel and inspired in part by the wheel described by the Prophet Ezekiel, will one day whisk away redeemed Black people before raining down nuclear annihilation in order to obliterate Jews and the degenerate White race from the face of the Earth. The controversial leader of the Nation of Islam, Louis Farrakhan, claims to have visited the Mother Wheel where he received additional revelation from Allah and conferred with his mentor Elijah Muhammad.

Mormonism is yet another faith that most Americans have at least heard of that they likely did not know could be legitimately interpreted as having a connection with extraterrestrials. Mormons might not be as explicit in referencing the phenomena as the Nation of Islam. However, the concept is nevertheless there. According to Mormon teaching, the entity humanity refers to as God was Himself once a man on another planet that advanced spiritually. By following His example, men in the Church

of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints can also hope to one day become a god over their own world if they play their cards right (that is, of course, if Mormons even play cards).

To the average Christian and American, the idea that extraterrestrials exist (to say nothing of the idea that extraterrestrials play an increasing role in the spirituality of the contemporary era) can baffle the imagination and unsettle the mind. However, planetary culture is being moved in that direction by a number of the most influential of societal institutions. Foremost among these rank entertainment, academia, and even certain divisions within the government.

On the surface, most people are drawn into science fiction through the stunning special effects depicting places viewers would never get to visit where characters do things ordinary people would never get to. However, upon deeper examination and reflection, many of these tales deal with much more profound truths such as the role of man in the universe and his relation to the creator --- whomever or whatever that might be. Some dabbling in these imaginary realms craft these narratives in the hopes that audiences will be subtlety directed towards considering a spirituality embracing life from beyond this world. For example, L. Ron Hubbard was so convinced as to the spiritual depth of science fiction that he was able to borrow those sorts of literary motifs to lay the foundation for what would come to be known as Scientology. Scientology believes that human beings are actually reincarnated extraterrestrials imprisoned in material form primarily as a result of an intergalactic tyrant. Through a process involving a significant donation of course to the Church of Scientology, the adherent can hope to achieve mental balance by reclaiming their status as a fully cleared operational Thetan.

Whereas L. Ron Hubbard took his abilities of verbal imaginative expression and harnessed them to develop a comprehensive system of belief, Stephen Spielberg used his own talents at storytelling to convey his beliefs regarding life beyond this world and the transformative implications of such in a manner not quite as explicitly doctrinaire. Spielberg's works span a wide spectrum of assumptions regarding extraterrestrial life. Both *ET* and *Close Encounters Of The Third Kind* view these beings with an almost messianic reverence. In *ET*, the creature seemingly dies and resurrects from the dead with the promise to dwell within the heart of his beloved disciple. Spielberg's "mythology" regarding extraterrestrials openly embraced an intriguing additional element in *Indiana Jones & The Kingdom Of The Crystal Skull*. In the story, it was hypothesized that these intelligences wanting to oversee the evolutionary enlightenment of the human species did not originate on a far off planet or the other side of the galaxy but rather from another dimension altogether.

Entertainment, though perhaps the most pervasive social institution taking the precepts of the extraterrestrial gospel to the greatest number, is not the only one doing so. For the academic world, despite not doing so as enthusiastically or with the same degree of fervor, does approach the extraterrestrial question with a renewed seriousness that will impact the future leaders of the planet for decades to come. This change in perspective is being brought about in part through the discipline of astrobiology or exobiology. By extrapolating what they have learned from hard sciences here on Earth such as biology, geology and physics, scientists hope to rationally hypothesize what life might be like elsewhere under a variety of environmental conditions. Perhaps one of the most famous theories regarding

deductions made from the available evidence is the Drake Equation, which attempts to estimate the number of planets in the universe that might possibly harbor intelligent life.

A number of esteemed scientists no doubt eagerly anticipate the day when intelligent life will come knocking at the world's doorstep. Interestingly, scientific superstar Stephen Hawking does not rank among them. It is the conclusion of this particular celebrity academic that interstellar travel is such an intensive undertaking that a civilization would not attempt it unless there was a dire need to do so such as to replenish dwindling natural resources. Such a compulsion would likely put this technologically overwhelming civilization in a frame of mind where it would be more inclined to take what it wanted rather than to share with others.

The third social institution with an interest in the extraterrestrial question is no doubt government. This fascination could be categorized as an infatuated ambiguity. On the one hand, the government will go to considerable lengths to deny this interest and even insinuate that claims to have interacted with such creatures is beyond the boundaries of rationality. The *Men In Black* films starring Will Smith and Tommy Lee Jones were inspired in part by claims of harassment suffered by UFO contactees as a result of mysterious operatives insinuating violence at the hands of authorities if the eyewitnesses of this disputed phenomena did not remain silent. Allen Hynek, before becoming a foremost ufologist, spent time on the government payroll not so much objectively analyzing whatever it was that might have been encountered but rather actively discrediting the accounts of those claiming to have experienced something from beyond this world.

Yet despite the government going out of its way to stifle

alternative voices challenging the official narrative of the day regarding extraterrestrial contact, the elites that oversee the administration of these pervasive bureaucracies are not above utilizing aspects of the extraterrestrial narrative when doing so advances particular outlooks and agendas. For example, government propagandists have invoked the threat of extraterrestrial invasion as a punishment that might befall a global population that refuses to embrace draconian climate control measures. Interestingly, if there is one thing that the government is loathe to admit to even more than the existence of extraterrestrials it is an orthodox understanding of God. For it seems the government has little problem relenting to the existence of extraterrestrials if doing so grants those in the planetary ruling class yet another chance to spit in the eye of the Almighty and those that love Him sincerely.

For at elite Department of Defense conferences, the world's greatest minds are not discerning how to build laser weapons of a sufficient wattage to blow flying saucers out of the sky. Instead these intellects are pondering whether or not Christ also died for Klingons. However, that discussion is usually not undertaken from the position of needing to draft a worldwide military strategy that would protect the greatest number while also acknowledging that these invaders might also possess rights needing to be recognized as beings also reflecting the divine image of the Creator not all that different than our own. Rather, such discussions are usually undertaken for the purposes of moving towards the conclusion that the greatest threat to progress on Earth is not so much aliens from outer space but rather adherents of traditionalist Christianity right here on this very planet. For unlike other religions, Christianity fundamentally pivots around the act of a single individual in a particular place at

an exact moment for a specified group. That is of course the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ as the incarnated member of the triune Godhead on behalf of the sins of the human race as the direct descendants of Adam and Eve.

Propositionally, classic theism does not have a philosophical problem with accepting the possibility of God creating physical life in multiple locations throughout the universe. However, such a possibility would create a number of Christological challenges. For example, if these beings had fallen into sin like humanity, would their sin be redeemed through the work of Jesus here on this planet for a people tracing their heritage back to a particular genetic origin? Or would Christ be required to endure multiple incarnations, crucifixions, and resurrections on behalf of God's other children? Furthermore, if these other physical beings have not fallen into sin, should they avoid interaction with our species at all costs in order to evade the consequences of contaminating their own species?

Secularists feigning an affectation of sophistication will no doubt skeptically muse how Christian simpletons reduce human contact with another intelligent species to the level of whether or not these visitors are keen on Jesus. Yet interestingly, though these intelligences might not hold to the same viewpoint regarding Jesus as a devout believer, it seems that for a species so advanced that they have perfected the complex sciences necessary to have traveled nearly incomprehensible distances, they too have dedicated a rather noticeable amount of time to formulating their own response to perhaps the most important question any sentient could ever be asked. That question is none other than, “Whom do you say that I am?” The person asking, of course, is Jesus Christ.

It might not make much sense for beings as bound by the laws of physics as human beings to expend the overwhelming resources necessary to make the trip across the cosmos just to tell those on a distant planet that Jesus is not the only path to eternal salvation or at least enlightenment but rather merely one of an infinite number. However, it might make more sense if the beings propagating such an errant gospel were merely appropriating the guise of strange visitors from other planets in order to capture the attention of the population for the purposes of conditioning the susceptible into embracing a desired spiritual distortion or deception. Satan craves nothing more than to be worshiped like God as evidenced by his threat recorded in Isaiah 14 vowing to sit upon the mount of the congregation and to ascend above the heights of the clouds.

Yet having been cast out of Glory and his defeat made certain by Christ's triumphant work at Calvary, for now the Dragon is satisfied receiving misdirected adoration rather than his name necessarily being on everyone's lips. Such devotion is not going towards the one true God as it ought and, as a result, Satan is dragging down as many as possible along with him into interminable destruction. Scripture testifies to how the devil and his angels have been allowed the ability to perform a variety of false signs and wonders. If it were possible, these are described as being so convincing that the very elect would be deceived to the seeming veracity of if not for the preserving grace of the Holy Spirit according to Matthew 24:24.

Not bound necessarily by the laws of nature limiting physical matter, fallen angels as transdimensional beings could theoretically appear to carry out a number of actions attributed to UFO's. Foremost among these would be the

sudden stops and shifts in direction described by various eyewitnesses. Interestingly, as noted previously, such movements sound similar to the motions of the wheels in Ezekiel that traversed only in straight directions.

Eschatological portions of Scripture have baffled both believers and skeptics for centuries. Even in the quiet of the scholar's study, such passages from the perspective of the finite human mind are less than clear. It is a reasonable conjecture that those witnessing a number of these events and predictions being fulfilled around them would interpret these as extraterrestrial in nature and might even be provided with that explanation by these ethereal intellects themselves claiming responsibility. For example, if the pretribulational interpretation of the Rapture proves correct, the millions left behind will have a difficult time accepting the fact that they have found themselves outside of the grace extended by God and must now endure both a series of overwhelming judgments as well as Satan pretty much unleashed to have his way for a short season. Amidst such turmoil, it would be very easy for outside powers to step forward insisting that they had to remove those pesky Christians once and for all for the benefit of those these ascended masters deem worthy of building humanity's golden age.

For many Christians, it might be difficult to embrace the notion that so-called extraterrestrials could become one of the primary apologetic challenges of the years and decades ahead. However, thirty years ago very few knew that within three short decades most teenagers would be walking around holding in their hands a miniaturized computer probably more powerful than the ones controlling the space shuttle at that time and with near-instantaneous access to knowledge surpassing the entire library of Alexandria.

From that comparison, it is reasonable to conjecture that the indeterminate and distant tomorrows will be characterized by innovations very few today can possibly comprehend.

Sadly, for a significant amount of time now, it seems that Christians as individual believers and institutionally in the form of the church have often been forced to play catchup in regards to a wide variety of developments to which satisfactory answers to the questions raised by such have not been formulated. In an era unfolding where the distinctions between the scientific and the mystical seem to be turning back on one another, the UFO or extraterrestrial paradigm could very well become commonplace as many look to that concept in the attempt to understand events that mortal minds cannot fully hope to comprehend. Thus, before little green men show up on the planet's doorstep asking to be taken to our leaders, it is imperative for the Christian to have formulated a response for the bewildered and perplexed pointing in the direction of the only Leader capable of providing salvation as the day of trouble approaches.

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